­­WHEPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Of the Parish Council held on**

**Wednesday July 1st 2015 at 7.30pm**

Attendees: Councillors N Aitkens-NA

M Morris-MM

A Robertson-ARR

L Smith-LS

County Councillor Terry Clements-TC

Borough Councillor Angela Rushen-AR

Clerk D Rix-DR

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| --- | --- |
| 1/98  9/99  8/100 | **Apologies for Absence** Nicola Mann (moving house) Stanley Durrant (unwell) David Till (no apology)  Cllr NA welcomed the new councillors LS and ARR. He said that while parish council was pretty relaxed in that councillors did not address one another as ‘councillor’, the WPC did adhere to certain standards and the Model Code of Conduct and if anyone felt that something inappropriate had been said or done to speak up.  **County Councillor’s Report** *(Cllr NA brought forward agenda item 9)*  Cllr TC said the appointment of Colin Noble as the new leader of SCC was good news as he was from the west of the county and better understood our needs. TC has been given a new role in driving forward a new initiative to make Suffolk the most active county.  He said £1,000 from his Locality Budget was still available to us for the new footpath and that if we were not happy with verge cutting or any other issues to use his name in an email. He praised Whepstead for being an active village. Regarding verge cutting, he said that contrary to popular belief there were more accidents when the verges were cut.  **Borough Councillor’s Report** (attached) *Cllr NA brought forward agenda item 8*  Cllr AR had sent a report in advance and had nothing to add to that. Cllr NA explained that Cllr AR played an active role on the Borough Council and was on the planning committee amongst others. He congratulated the Borough Council for the work it did maintaining Bury St Edmund’s eminence and character. Cllr AR said that the planning application for Chestnuts on Brockley Road was withdrawn when it went to the delegation panel as the recommendation was a refusal*. (Cllr AR left the meeting at 7.50pm)* |
| 2/101  3/102 | **Declarations of Interest**  None  **Appointment of SALC representative**  DR said that having spoken to Cllr SD before the meeting, he was happy to take on the role. |
| 4/103  5/102  6/103  7/104  10/105  11/106  12/107  13/108  14/109  15/110  16/111  17/112  18/113  19/114  20/115  21/116  22/117  23/118  24/119  25/120 | **Appointment of WCA representative**  Cllr AR was happy to take on the role.  **Appointment of Footpath Warden**  Cllr NA explained that Graham O’Dell was doing a great job looking after our footpaths with a regular working party cutting back hedges and keeping signs clear and was prepared to continue doing it. So the WPC would devolve responsibility to him until he was no longer happy to do it.  **Appointment of Tree Warden**  Cllr NA explained that in the past the Borough Council had made free trees available, but the problem was finding a suitable site for the size and nature of the trees in their maturity. He said that Steve Nutt had suggested that he would be interested in becoming warden. Cllr NA to ask.  **Appointment of Neighbourhood Watch Representative**  Cllr NA explained that in the past there had been an overall co-ordinator in the village with representatives in each road and that they used to hold regular meetings with the police. While the Police used to attend every parish council meeting they now attended once every 4/5 meetings. He also said that the Rural South Watch scheme ([ruralsouthwatch@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ruralsouthwatch@hotmail.co.uk)) run by a volunteer in Hundon was very successful in passing on information about crime or suspicious activity. Cllr LS said that she would be happy to have a go at becoming the neighbourhood watch rep and take over responsibility for delivering Welcome Packs. Cllr NA to speak to Steve Nutt first.  **Community Police Officer’s Report**  PCSO Claire Ross’s report said that there had been no crimes in Whepstead since our last meeting on May 20th and that there were no ‘trends’ in relation to crimes in the area. She urged villagers to use the 101 telephone number to report anything suspicious whilst out and about.  **Public Forum**  None  **Planning Applications**  Councillors discussed the application DC/15/0896/HH for 2 Post Office House to link the existing garage at the rear of the property to the house and voted to support it. DR to report decision. DR apologised that in the newsletter she had reported the TCA application as the removal of four trees, when in fact it was only the removal of overhanging branches from four trees.  Cllr ARR suggested we mention in the newsletter that the agenda for our meetings is on the website and noticeboard at least three days in advance of the parish council meetings, so that villagers could see what was going to be discussed. DR to add meeting dates to newsletter copy too.  **Minutes of the Meeting held on May 20th 2015**  It was proposed by Cllr MM and seconded by Cllr NA that the minutes were an accurate record.  **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the May 20th meeting**  Cllr LS mentioned that the minutes stated that a planning representative was sought. Cllr NA said that he now felt that all councillors should take an active interest and attend training courses in planning matters in the village and when given the opportunity to speak at a Borough planning meeting, the councillor who felt most strongly about the planning issue being discussed should do the job.  **Clerk’s Report**  DR said that Robin Drayton had internally audited the accounts and found no errors so she would send off the accounts and the information required as part of a one-off review questionnaire to the external auditor BDO before the July 13th deadline. She had reported the pothole near Dovedon. She said that she was going to organise the archive cupboard at the community centre to make room for the history group files next Tuesday and Graham O’Dell was going to help. She had fulfilled – with the help of Graham O’Dell - the council’s obligations under the Transparency Code by publishing on the website an array of information including annual accounts, a register of assets, councillor Register of Interest forms, and the bank reconciliation for the year to end March 2015.  She had also registered with the Pensions Regulator before the July 31st deadline, submitted the election expenses forms by the June 11th deadline and the Register of Interest forms by the June 8th deadline.  She had thanked Graham O’Dell for his work securing the £2,700 s106 open spaces funding and organised for the delivery of a Welcome Pack to the new couple in Satchels.  **Finance**  DR thanked Cllr LS for dropping off the bank signatory forms, and asked for yet more signatures to complete the necessary forms.  DR mentioned the PCC’s request to be reimbursed for the £150 cost of tree pruning near the church and in the cemetery car park. Cllr NA declared an interest as he is on the PCC. He said that the Borough Council takes responsibility for maintenance of the churchyard, while the PCC is responsible for the cemetery. Cllr MM proposed and Cllr AR seconded that the £150 be paid, but in future Cllr MM said that we might need to clarify which part of the church grounds the PC would contribute towards.  As a result, there were four invoices for payment:  Clerk’s April-June fees: £1,011.65  Clerk’s April-June expenses: £300.27  Clerk’s April-June tax: £82.20  PCC tree pruning: £150  It was proposed by Cllr LS and seconded by Cllr MM that the cheques and bank reconciliation for the end of May were signed.  **Bank balances at 30th May 2015**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Balance in treasurers account | £12,525.59 | | Savings account | £10,428.95 | | Total | £22,954.54 | | Less cheques not presented | nil | | Total | £22,954.54 |   **Footpaths, Highways and Byways**  Graham O’Dell had reported that the working party had cut back vegetation in front of the community centre and they aimed to do the same ahead of the Jumble sale in mid-July. He said this week they hoped to cut back weed growth around the base of traffic signs and 30mph repeater signs where the verge cutters couldn’t reach.  Weed growth was blocking the footpath opposite Owl Cottage on Fern Hill. DR to report. The kerb outside the chapel had been dropped. DR to thank Terry Clements. And footpath 15 next to Whepstead Manor had been cleared. DR to thank Cllr Till. Maureen Orange reported that the byway linking Old School Road and Pages Hill was virtually impassable. DR to report.  A definitive map officer has been appointed for the proposed new footpath by the river. DR to write to Patrick Scrivens and ask for a footpath cutting schedule. DR to give a copy of a map of the village footpaths to all councillors.  Graham O’Dell also reported that the vehicle activated sign (VAS) which we now share with Chevington and Chedburgh was due back in the village at the end of the week. Each village was having use of the sign for two weeks at a time.  **Footpath to Church on Church Hill**  Following a number of complaints from villagers, Cllr NA said he had been to speak to the residents who had planted a laurel hedge outside their home on the footpath to the Church.  He said they were adamant that it was their land and that they could do anything that they wanted on it. Cllr NA said in the distant past owners were said to own in front of their properties to the middle of the road. Now there is the suggestion that it is to the ditch or 5ft in front. He said the path was regularly used by attendees of funerals going for refreshments afterwards at the community centre and at the annual remembrance service when people walked from the church to the war memorial by the bus stop. He had seen parents, who pick their children up from the church car park, have to walk in the road around the hedge. He sought approval to speak to the County Council about it. All agreed.  **Broadband**  Everyone agreed that it was good news that Andrew Maddever had signed a contract for the installation of a new green box. Dates for the next phase of Suffolk Better Broadband are to be announced in the autumn. Cllr NA reported that two residents of Brockley Road had reported speeds of 0.5 mbps, but when one switched supplier to BT his improved to 3.5 mbps.  **Trees**  Cllr NA confirmed that he would speak to Steve Nutt about becoming tree warden.  **Suffolk Association of Local Councils**  None  **Whepstead Community Association Report**  DR to write to Lesley Kearney and let her know that Cllr ARR was our new WCA representative.  **Correspondence**  DR said that a meeting on the future of local policing was taking place in BSE on July 21st. Cllr NA passed the invite to Cllr LS.  DR mentioned a Borough conference ‘Smarter Funding: Better Outcomes’ taking place on July 15th aimed at helping community groups better understand what grant funding bodies are looking for. Cllr NA passed the invite to Cllr ARR. DR said that the Autumn Parish Conference was taking place on October 12th in Haverhill.  **Chairman’s Comments**  Cllr NA thanked those in attendance for coming.  **Any Other Business**  None  The meeting closed at 9pm  Signed………………………………………………  Dated………………………………………… |