

**Minutes of the Meeting of Fressingfield Parish Council
held in the Sancroft Hall, Fressingfield
on Tuesday 19 January 2016**

Present: Prue Rush; Garry Deeks; Caroline Day; Philip Eastgate; Judy Fullam; Warren Last; Crispin Muir; Ian Smith; Malcolm Ward; Dave Wheeler

In Attendance: Cllr Guy McGregor; Carol A Smy (Clerk)
members of the public attended

Public Forum: *the scope of this evening's discussion on the re-submitted application (0846/15) was questioned and it was explained that the new response from the Highways Department and the modification of the chapel design were the points at issue. Drainage issues were raised: the ditch towards Sancroft Way does not drain; the water in the ditch flows uphill; the effect of building on the site should rainfall continue to be heavy in future years was raised: the concern was that so much hard-surfacing would lead to flooding such as has been seen in other parts of the country in recent months. Anglian Water had addressed this possibility and would take excess surface water. It was stated that an ecological survey was still outstanding and the Chairman explained this would be undertaken at the appropriate time as directed by MSDC and was not within the remit of the Parish Council. Concern was raised about the size of the proposed chapel and whether such a large building was required. It was explained that the height had been lowered. Final comments were made about road safety: double yellow lines were suggested for School Lane to prevent parking and this was seen as a possibility. Concern was raised that 18 dwellings would result in a huge increase in traffic movements. Also, the traffic during the construction phases was seen as troublesome but it was stated that there could be controls requested on the times of traffic movements to ensure that there was no heavy traffic there at school drop-off/pick-up times. Another resident commented that the safety of the children was paramount but that the prospect of a new car park was very welcome as it would remove the current hazard of cars outside the school and along Stradbroke Road. It was noted that the school staff were very much in favour of the proposal and the potential benefits it brought to the safety of the school.*

16.1 Chairman's welcome

16.2 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from: Peter Vincent; Malcolm Roberts; Lavinia Hadingham

16.3 Members' Declarations of Interest – IS declared a personal interest in item: 16.7.1

16.4 Dispensations – there were no requests

16.5 The Minutes of Last Meeting – 20 October 2015; approved unanimously and signed. Prop: JF; seconded IS

16.6 Housing Needs Survey/Parish Plan update

16.6.1 Members had been advised of the results of the HNS by Sunila Osborne of Community Action Suffolk at the planning meeting held on 03 November 2015.

16.6.2 A Working Party had met to consider the formulation of an Action Plan/Development Plan for the village. The draft document had been circulated to members.

16.6.3 GRD expanded upon the draft plan: Councillors were asked to consider the draft so that a firm document could be finalised and then shared with the planning department to ensure that the wishes of the village, as a whole, were borne in mind when planning decisions were being made. A further outcome of the Housing Needs Survey was a demonstrated interest in allotments. This was illustrated by the interest in forming Fressingfield Community Gardeners and an initial meeting, with 24 people attending, had already taken place.

16.7 To consider any Planning Matters including:

16.7.1 Applications for consideration at this meeting:

0846/15 hybrid application comprising: application for full detailed planning permission for the erection of a new Baptist Chapel, car parking and access & an application for outline planning permission for up to 18 no residential units as amended by drawings received 17 November 2015 altering the design of the chapel and drawing 18975/802 rev A received 11 January 2016 amending the road layout and agent's letter received 11 January 2016

Land South West of School Lane

Approval was recommended for the above application by a majority vote: 1 x abstention; 1 x no vote; prop: JF, seconded GRD. The Council's additional comments would be included in the response to MSDC and could then be viewed on its website

16.7.2 Applications considered at previous planning meetings:

Approval recommended:

2355/15 exterior works: 20 x photovoltaic cells to be attached to sloping south facing tiled roof of garage. interior works: removal of open-framed partition wall on ground floor separating study and family room. Removal of modern brick plinth; area made open plan

Vine Cottage, Church Street

2356/15 removal of open-framed partition wall on ground floor separating study and family room. Removal of modern brick plinth (LBC)

Vine Cottage, Church Street

3536/15 erection of single storey pitched roof rear extension

West Cottage, New Street

16.7.3 **Notification of decisions reached by MSDC:**

Approval was granted for the following applications which had approval recommended at previous meetings:

2355/15

Vine Cottage, Church Street

2356/15

Vine Cottage, Church Street

3536/15

West Cottage, New Street

16.7.4 **Other Planning Matters:**

16.7.4.i Change of use at Chippenhall Green – no breach of planning control was identified by the Enforcement Officer

16.7.4.ii The Clerk had been asked to contact the Enforcement Officer of the Planning Department at MSDC concerning work being undertaken at Ufford Hall. A site visit had been undertaken by the Enforcement Officer and Heritage Officer and all work had been deemed lawful/necessary.

16.7.4.ii MSDC had undertaken a reorganisation of the Planning Department. The District had been divided into areas and Fressingfield would come under the ‘yellow team’ encompassing Fressingfield, Hoxne and Stradbroke & Laxfield.

16.7.4.iii letter from the Planning Officer engaged with the Chapel proposal concerning the adoption of the proposed play park should the application for the chapel etc. proceed. Members wished to discuss this further with the developers in due course.

16.8 **Matters of Report:**

16.8.1 **Dog bins** – Chairman’s and Clerk’s commitments have meant this was still ongoing. Bob Stanley would install the bin in due course.

Chairman & Clerk to action

16.8.2 **Defibrillator** – this had been the cause of a great deal of nuisance. The Clerk had contacted several electricians but quotations had not been forthcoming. A further contact was provided and this would be followed up. The TLC had featured an article about Somersham’s defibrillator, which had also been sited in the redundant telephone kiosk. . . again calls and emails had not been answered. The Clerk was now in the process of contacting BT to attempt to find a way forward.

Clerk to action

16.8.3 **Speed Indicator signs** – CM reported that the cost of mobile signs was around the £3/4000 mark. Members agreed that the purchase of one or two mobile cameras would be an asset to the village and probably more effective than speed checks. Cost and regulations would be investigated. CM reported having seen a young driver passing through the village at excessive speeds on more than one occasion. This would be reported.

CM to action

16.8.4 **Training courses**

16.8.4.i 5 councillors attended the planning training plus 5 from Weybread and 4 from Metfield. It was unfortunate that so few were unable to attend (3 apologies received).

16.8.4.ii there are several courses at SALC: Councillors’ Training day – 2 day course 13/20 Feb 16; Grants & Funding Opportunities 6 Feb 16; Code of Conduct Briefing 16 Feb 16;

16.8.5 **Tenders for groundworks** – the only contractor to submit tenders in answer to the advertisement inviting interest in the grasscutting and maintenance work had been Matthew Hammond. He would be asked to undertake the work for the coming three years.

16.9 **To receive the Financial Report & Approval of Accounts for payment:**

16.9.1 The transfer of banking to Unity Trust Bank had finally been concluded.

16.9.2 Approval of accounts for payment – cheques as per appended sheet – prop DW; seconded PE; unanimous

16.9.3 Account balances at 31 December 2015:

Current account: £42,438.93

Tracker account: £0

There were unrepresented cheques totalling: £383.00

Balance at 31 December 2015: £42,055.93

16.9.4 Budget and precept setting meeting – some amendments had been made to the draft budget following increased costs being notified after the last meeting (see 16.8.5). The revised budget was approved unanimously and the precept set at £15,750.

16.9.5 The Clerk's gratuity – this had been the subject of some question (following the Clerk's attending a finance workshop) and there was some confusion as to the calculation method. It appeared, at first, as though the sum set aside was grossly underfunded but information leading to this conclusion was incorrect. The correct figure has now been assessed and the reserved sum is a little over that required by the calculation. It was agreed that a sum should continue to be set aside so that when the Clerk eventually left there would be an adequate fund should a gratuity be paid.

16.9.6 Tenders for all three grass cutting contracts. *See 16.8.5*. There had been a slight underestimate in the draft budget for these costs.

16.9.7 Request for donations received from Headway Suffolk; Age Concern; Scouts (letter circulated)

16.9.7.i members agreed unanimously to give the Sports and Social Club £100 towards the cost of the re-painting. It was also agreed unanimously to grant £150 towards the Scouts' minibuss appeal.

16.9.8 **New Audit regime** – the audit regime had changed following the ratification of the Transparency Code. This would affect Fressingfield PC as its turnover was less than £25,000pa. From 2017 the current audit arrangements cease and the PC may either opt-in to the newly formed sector-led body or, alternatively, procure its own auditors. The latter course was likely to prove more costly and burdensome for the Council. Fressingfield PC would no longer have to submit an annual financial return but would need to have an audit regime in place in the event of the accounts being challenged and an audit thus being required. The Clerk advised that the sector-led body would be the best way forward and so recommended the Council opt in. Decisions? Prop: seconded: unanimous?

16.9.9 SALC had secured funding to facilitate the compliance with the Transparency Code. The Council agreed that it would not apply for funding at this time.

16.10 Emergency Planning – the Vice Chairman had attended Emergency Planning meetings and recommended the rather dated Emergency Plan be re-examined and made more current and appropriate. He, the Chairman and PE would form a working party to construct a new plan.

16.11 Street Lighting - ongoing

16.12 To receive reports from the County & District Councillors and the Community Beat Officer:

16.12.1 County Councillor – Cllr McGregor advised that the project to introduce superfast broadband throughout Suffolk was ongoing and it was scheduled to have 95% coverage by 2019 and 100% by 2020. SCC stood by its election commitment not to raise its portion of the council tax. The levy introduced to support Adult Social Care was balanced by the increase cost of providing the living wage for all employees. Children's Services had achieved a 'good' rating from Ofsted. Cllr McGregor would make the County Surveyor aware of the degenerating road surface along Harleston Hill.

16.12.2 District Councillor - report circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. In the on-going Devolution discussions, leaders have agreed to start a dialogue with colleagues in Cambridgeshire to explore the possibility of closer co-operation with those councils; although work on the Norfolk Suffolk proposals will also continue as planned. Encouragingly, a Grant Thornton survey of larger businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk showed that over half of respondents support having more local control over infrastructure, economic development and skills. The Comprehensive Spending Review at the end of November was a bit of a blow. The good news is we know what funding we are getting over the next 4 years, the bad news is it's not much money! The heads of council were braced for cuts of around 30%, for 2016/17 but were faced with 46%. Government funding in 2014/15 was £17.5m, from 2020 it will be nothing. Consequently, the council are having a Management Review, looking to let go of more staff as well as hoping to slim down the councillor numbers too. This coincides with a Boundary Review Process, which is aiming to ensure, as far as it is reasonable, that the ratio of electors to councillors, in each electoral ward or division, is the same. This will also include revising ward boundaries. I have a draft of the "functional clusters" (for the purposes of assessing housing need) which shows Fressingfield joining with Stradbroke and Metfield, Weybread and Mendham joining a larger cluster that includes Harleston. On a happier note, the applications for the Locality Award are in and I'm pleased to announce that Metfield Village Hall will be getting money towards the extension of a Community Hub. The Fressingfield Scout Group towards a replacement minibuss and money is also going to the Fressingfield Play Area Fund and The Friday Fun Club, which is a youth group run from Withersdale Village Hall.

16.12.3 Police – there was no police report and there would be none in the future.

16.13 Social Club

16.13.1 Minutes of the November, December, January meetings had been circulated and were noted

16.14 Playingfield Management Committee – no report

16.15 Play Area

16.15.1 A group had come together to look into the refurbishment of the Play Area and was seeking grant funding. The Chairman and Clerk would be meeting the group to discuss all aspects of the project which would be a working party of the Parish Council. Items to be addressed included: risk assessments, regular maintenance of equipment, grass cutting (this latter items has come under the remit of the PC since Clive Skoyles stood down)

16.16 Road Safety

16.16.1 barrier across the footpath on to Harleston Road ongoing. The Clerk's contact in the Highways Department was pursuing the contractors to have the work concluded.

16.17 Correspondence

16.17.1 AgeUK – advice note that February is Will Month – during this month 16 solicitors in Suffolk are offering will writing in exchange for a donation to the charity. Information from AgeUK. Clerk had details. Also looking for people prepared to open their gardens for the charity during 2016.

16.17.2 letter circulated from Clare Town Council on the subject of match funding for PCSOs.

16.17.3 Scouts' Spring newsletter circulated to members

16.17.4 letter from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service ... comments invited on the re-design consultation

Tabled items: information brochure from Unity Trust Bank; leaflet from MEP;

16.18 To Receive the Clerk's Report

16.18.1 Refuse collection calendar posted on the website

16.18.2 SALC area meetings on 03 March; 22 June; 22 September; 1 December

16.18.3 A competition had been launched to find the most active communities in Suffolk

16.18.4 90th birthday of HM The Queen – beacons were to be lit. Any link between the fete and the birthday celebrations would be discussed at a future meeting. Suggestions included red, white and blue bunting, plates and napkins, cake competition

16.18.5 *Annual CleanUp 2016* – Peter Vincent has coordinated this in the past but was now unavailable. JF offered to coordinate the event and this was gratefully accepted. This year's date would be 05 March 2016 from 10am to 12 noon.

16.18.6 Meeting dates for 2016... June planning meetings were scheduled for 7th and 21st.

16.19 Matters of Information brought by the Chairman or Members:

16.19.1 parking at a couple of houses on Laxfield Road was causing some nuisance as vehicles were being driven over the verge onto gardens and thus churning up the verge and depositing a good deal of mud on the pavement. The Clerk was asked to write to MSDC for action.

16.19.2 the interest shown in the provision of allotments was high and the Council expressed its support in the search for suitable land.

16.20 To receive Notice of Matters for Inclusion in the Agenda for the next Meeting of the Parish Council – 19 March 2016

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 2200hrs

**Signed:
Chairman**

20 March 2016

In the time set aside for comments from the public following the meeting the only topic raised was newts and the effect on them of the necessary reduction of the brambles at the entrance to School Lane.