

MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 8pm on Monday 12th October 2009 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr K Chittock, Mr R Burnett, Mr C Cripps, Mr J Hewitson,
Mr S Hubner, Mr B Hull, Mr A Miller, Mr R Owen

Also County Councillor Andrew Stringer and Di Noller of ORAC

1. Election of Vice Chair

Mr Hull was proposed and seconded as Vice Chair and unanimously elected

2. Reports from County Councillor, Community Police Officer

2(1) County Councillor Stringer gave his report to the meeting

Schools Review Put On Hold

The Schools organisation review heralded as the biggest review of secondary education in Suffolk for a generation has effectively been put on hold mainly due to lack of secured funding. The review has been done in three phases according to area. In Lowestoft which was the first area to be looked at building has started. The Newmarket /Haverhill area is currently under consultation. The central area including Occold has now had the review put on hold

The consequences of this for our area should not be underestimated.

Some schools have already secured staff financially to keep hold of them during the reorganisation, as this has now effectively been paused, the term of these contracts could now be open-ended.

During the debate in 2007 much was made of the amendment put forward by the conservative administration, stating that Federation could be looked into as an option for all schools being reviewed, however, the document now being circulated in the Sudbury area for public consultation does not mention the word 'Federation' once.

This is especially annoying as during the long public consultation and debate surrounding the wholesale change to an entirely 2 tier system for Suffolk we were repeatedly told that councillors and public would be listened to and those that were sceptical consistently insisted not to go ahead with the review unless the money was assured.

More doom and gloom!

During last week's full council meeting we were treated to lots of predictions surrounding budget cuts with figures being banded around suggesting that Suffolk Councils may be facing 30% shortfalls in the near future and informing us councilors to get our communities to do more with less (something I thought we already did)

But amid all these gloomy predictions regarding our finances I noticed that Suffolk County Council has just pledged £1,000,000 to the Horse Racing Museum in Newmarket – obviously times are hard!

2(2) Community Police Officer

The Clerk read out the following report supplied by PCSO Emma Cowell: -

Reported Crimes

Since the 14th September 2009, there have been no reported crimes.

Team News

We have a new member of the Team Phil Webb. Phil is our new Police Volunteer & will be helping us out with many things within the team. He will be attending our Tasking Group meetings, help with events & write reports for Parish Councils. His picture will be on our Web page shortly.

Mid Suffolk Central Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators Meeting

Thursday 15th October 2009 at 7.30pm at the Stonham Parva Baptist Chapel. We would like to encourage as many Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to attend as possible as there has been poor attendance at the last few meetings.

Halloween & Fireworks Night

We are launching our yearly Halloween Campaign. We have given Halloween Packs to all Primary Schools & we have been going into the schools to give the Children about being safe on Halloween & Bonfire night.

We have posters available for those who do not wish Trick & Treaters to call at their house. These can be displayed in your window for the Trick & Treaters to see. If you would like one of the posters, please contact us.

Events in Occold

If you have any upcoming events (eg. Litter Pick, Fun runs, Discos) in Occold, please let us know

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Monday 14th September 2009, which had previously been circulated to Councillors, were unanimously approved

4. Matters Arising

4(1) Item 4(1) 14.9.09: Bus Stop

The Clerk read out a letter from ORAC in response to the results of the questionnaires that had been distributed in the village. They have agreed to make available the necessary land for the hardstanding for a bus stop and shelter. However their preference is for the stop to be positioned to the left of the phone box (and consider removal of the phone box as it is not used much) and to have a shelter more in keeping with the village surroundings. Councillors were pleased that there is now agreement in principle to site the bus stop on the green

The Clerk had contacted Suffolk County Council about the possible siting of the bus stop to the left of the telephone box. The proximity of the trees may be a problem as it requires specialist construction techniques due to the roots. The Parish Council had assumed that the trees, one of which is dead, would be removed

Clerk to contact the tree officer about possible removal of the trees, BT about usage of the phone box over the past 5 years and procedure for its removal, look into costs of other shelter designs and whether they must comply with any regulations, also the implications of cost for maintenance etc of a non-standard design, and to ORAC to tell them that this is happening. It would be advisable to contact the Locality Budget Officer to let her know that the money set aside from Councillor Clover's locality budget will be needed soon

4(2) Item 4(3) 14.9.09: Gravel on highway

The Clerk was asked to follow up to see whether Gerald Clarke had taken any further action

4(3) Item 5(3) 14.9.09: Vacancy for Councillor

Mrs Michelle Grange had expressed a verbal interest in filling the vacant position but had not yet put anything in writing. She would hopefully do so before the next meeting

4(4) As he had not attended the last meeting Mr Hull wanted to ensure that Mr Hewitson had been thanked for his superb work as Footpaths Warden because the Minutes did not state that this had been done

4(5) Mr Hull suggested that the Parish Council should give consideration before the next Village Forum meeting as to items of interest that could be reported to that meeting, and suggested that this was made an Agenda item for either the December or January meeting

5. Correspondence

5(1) Correspondence for circulation – SALC Annual Report and Minutes of last year’s AGM

5(2) The Clerk read out a questionnaire from Mid Suffolk District Council on Community Engagement and asked for councillors input in completing it

5(3) The Clerk read out a letter from ORAC regarding the opening of the new village hall and thanking the Parish Council for its donation

5(4) A letter had been received from Suffolk County Council inviting comments on part-night lighting and dimming of streetlights. The Parish Council was in favour of some part-night lighting measures by switching of during the early hours but felt that dimming was not a realistic option, partly from the point of view of cost. Clerk to reply

6. Parish Paths Partnership

6(1) No applications had been received for the vacancy of Footpaths Warden

7. Planning Matters

7(1) The Parish Council had been invited to take part in consultation on the East of England Plan > 2031 (See the East of England Regional Assembly website www.eera.gov.uk for the consultation document) Comments due by 24th November

8. Meetings and Training

8(1) Planning course held at SALC

The Clerk reported that this had been a very informative course

8(2) MSDC Parish Liaison Meetin

Mr Hewitson had attended this meeting and found it to be well-attended and very interesting
Two issues in particular to be passed on to the Parish Council: -

1. Mid Suffolk is having problems getting the Mid Suffolk Messenger delivered in rural areas and is asking for Parish Councils to arrange local delivery. They will pay 15p per delivered copy. It was agreed that Occold Parish Council could organise this for our parish
2. The General Election looks likely to be held on May 6th or 7th (whichever is a

Thursday) and a provisional booking of the village hall should be made for that date

8(3) An invitation to attend SALC AGM at Haughley Park Barn 7pm 9th November 2009 (preceded by presentations, drinks reception and dinner from 3pm) had been received

8(4) SALC were also holding some networking sessions in the winter to include a workshop and lunch. The nearest to Occold is at the Cornwallis Hotel on Friday 20th November

9. Finance

9(1) Submitted for payment the Clerk's salary for 6 months to September 30th 2009: £894 (NALC salary awards 2009/10 SC21 = £9,941, 180 hours = £1789 per annum). It was confirmed that this was being paid on the basis that the Clerk's salary should move up the NALC payscale by one point as per her contract of employment. With regard to this the question of introducing a formal appraisal procedure for the Clerk was discussed. To be put on the Agenda of the November meeting

9(2) It was noted that the Completion of Audit notice had been received and the external Auditor's report. This raised the issue of the Risk Assessment document and the Assets Register, both of which were being addressed. Also submitted for payment invoice from BDO Stoy Hayward for audit services amounting to £120+£18VAT = £138. Approved

9(3) The Clerk had started to prepare an amended Assets Register which must include the date of acquisition and the purchase price of any assets. To be brought to the next meeting for approval

9(4) It was noted that the new insurance policy had been taken out with Aviva

9(5) Submitted for payment an invoice from SALC for Planning Course (£25) and NALC Legal Topic Notes (£28) of £53 + £3.75VAT = £56.75. Approved

9(6) Submitted for payment an invoice from Suffolk County Council for street lighting maintenance and supply for period 1.4.2009 – 30.9.2009 of £365.42 + £54.81VAT = £420.23. Approved

9(7) It was noted that interest of £0.19 had accrued on Nationwide account for quarter to 30th September 2009

10. Date of next meeting is Monday 9th November 2009 at 8pm in the Village Hall. Councillors were reminded that the day before the next meeting would be Remembrance Sunday and were urged to attend the service to be held at St Michael's Church. The Clerk had arranged the purchase of a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council

Meeting closed 9.15pm