

MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 8pm on Monday 6th July 2009 in the Village Hall.

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

Also County Councillor Andrew Stringer, Police Community Support Officer Chris Bales, and parishioners Mr Donald Turner, Mr Barry Woods, Mrs Lesley Hull, Mrs Dawn Crisp

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from District Councillor Charles Tilbury

Mr Owen declared a personal interest in Item 6 regarding public footpaths

2. Reports from County Councillor, District Councillor, Community Police Officer

2(1) PCSO Chris Bales reported that there had been no crimes in Occold since the last Parish Council meeting. He urged people to contact the police if they see anyone acting in a suspicious manner – they would rather attend and find it to be nothing of concern than have a crime take place that could have been prevented if a resident had called them. PCSO was asked about the Community Speedwatch scheme. This had been trialled in the east of the county and involved local residents being trained to use the speed guns. However the scheme had been subject to long delays because of the need for CRB checks, calibration of equipment, etc. It is now carried out by PCSO's with the assistance of the local community, for example through Neighbourhood Watch or the Parish Council. At the request of the Parish Council PCSO Bales agreed to put Occold forward at the next tasking meeting for consideration as a priority village for speed monitoring under this scheme. The Debenham SNT now has its own speed gun which improves the number of villages they can get to. The problem of motorbikes speeding along the B1077 on Sunday mornings was also reported to PCSO Bales

2(2) The Clerk read out the following report provided by County Councillor Stringer: -
Ready to Go.

I have now been through all the induction and training programs etc at Endeavour House and been given passes telephone directories I.T equipment etc.

I have a place on the Development Control panel (planning),

The Rights of Way and the Environment & Waste Scrutiny Committees.

Local Needs Transport Budget

I have been given a small budget for local transport schemes the budget was for the Mid Suffolk area (10 county divisions) set at £150,000.00.

£50,000.00 has been top sliced for later in the year! I will challenge this at a locality meeting on Thursday. This leaves us with £10,000.00 to be split between 15 villages. A number of schemes have already been forwarded to me, if you have schemes you would like to be considered please send them to me.

Locality Budget

All county councillors have a Locality budget for their respective divisions to be spent on Capital items to benefit our community. I now have the Forms to apply for these funds, I aim to be totally democratic with my budget and divide it between the 14 parishes in my

division on a per head basis. Please let me know of any schemes that might benefit from the fund.

G39 Streetlight Issues [see also Item 4(2) below]

Have spoken to Nigel Pantings departmental manager Richard Webster who informs me the guidance for Parish Councils on G39 issues has now been sent to Shona Bendix at SALC for distribution to Parish Councils.

I have a number of complaints regarding slow response times etc and maintenance of streetlights we are hoping to organise a meeting to achieve a better understanding between all sides regarding reasonable timescales of service delivery.

Police Climate Warning!

I have been sent an interesting document regarding Policing in the Mid Suffolk area produced by the County Council. The Mid Suffolk Policing review includes a colour picture of a Pier with waves crashing around it, the last time I looked Mid Suffolk has no coast line, unless the police know something about climate change we don't!

2(3) The Clerk read out the following report which had been provided by District Councillor Charles Tilbury about the Local Government Review: -

A High Court hearing has been scheduled for 30 June - 3 July 2009. The outcome of this hearing could have an impact on the Boundary Committee's ability to publish to the Secretary of State, on 15 July, their final recommendation on the best option for a unitary council structure in Suffolk.

The Boundary Committee has been carrying out an independent review of unitary council options for Suffolk. They undertook further consultation from March until May 2009. Mid Suffolk District Council formally supports having a single unitary council covering the whole of Suffolk, and reiterated this in our submission of 14 May.

The Boundary Committee is due to publish their final recommendation on 15th July 2009, and it is then expected that the Secretary of State will make a decision by September, and gain Parliamentary agreement by the end of the year.

However, there are many ongoing risks, mainly associated with national politics, that could delay and even stop the whole process, and as such a state of uncertainty is expected to continue for several more months.

One such risk is delays resulting from requests for Judicial Review of the process that the Boundary Committee has followed.

The LGR review in Suffolk has been partially affected by previous Judicial Review requests instigated by councils in Norfolk and separately in Devon, both of which delayed but did not stop the LGR consultation process.

On 18 May 2009 Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council, submitted requests for Judicial Review of the BC's process. The grounds that they put forward were that the BC:

- failed to deal with them (the three councils) fairly

- failed to consult with them adequately or at all
- failed to make comparisons with the 'status quo', which is inconsistent with the decisions in East Devon and Norfolk.

On 11 June the High Court granted permission for the application for Judicial Review to proceed, notwithstanding the 'grounds of resistance' document that the BC has submitted in response to the application. Formal filing and service of papers was required by last Friday, 19 June, any further evidence to be submitted by 26 June, and the full hearing to commence on 30 June.

In addition, at the end of June we received some additional comments from the Department of Communities and Local Government . They confirm their positive commitment to see the process through to a satisfactory conclusion, with adequate time allowed for representations to the Secretary of State, following the recommendations from the Boundary Committee expected on 15 July.

Some of the key points are:

- * The original Ipswich Borough Council unitary proposal is still a possible option for consideration.
- * Where the Boundary Committee makes one or more alternative unitary proposals for an area, the Secretary of State will reach a view as to whether or not he shares the Boundary Committee's judgement about the proposal's capacity to deliver the outcomes specified by the criteria, and he will also consider whether or not it would be desirable to modify the proposal.
- * He will be particularly focused on whether the proposal would have the capacity to deliver the three long-term outcomes specified by the criteria - effective strategic leadership; neighbourhood empowerment; and value for money and equity on public services.
- * There will be an opportunity for anyone who wishes to make representations to the Secretary of State about the proposal(s) to do so during the period beginning on 15 July 2009 and ending on 18 September 2009.
- * The Secretary of State would, subject to the complexity of the issues involved, expect to be able to take his statutory decisions during the autumn, ideally by mid October 2009.
- * Once he has taken his statutory decisions the Secretary of State will announce them to Parliament, with the expectation that the necessary draft structural change Order would be laid before Parliament by around the end of 2009. This would provide, if approved by Parliament, for the new unitary council to be established by 1 April 2011.
- * The Secretary of State recognises that councils may also wish to make oral representations to him, and there will be an opportunity for a delegation from each affected council (or jointly) to meet Ministers in order to make such representations. Two periods

have been allocated for this, either 15 to 29 July, or 4 to 18 September. A prerequisite for a meeting with Ministers is that the delegation must be led by an elected representative from the area (for example, a council leader or local MP).

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 8th June 2009, which had previously been circulated to Councillors, were submitted for approval

Mr Dyla requested that the Minutes be amended to report the discussion that took place about the amendment to the previous month's Minutes, during which Mr Hull stated that withholding money for the village hall from ORAC until a response had been received about the bus stop might be construed as blackmail. Mr Dyla believed this to be a personal attack on him and requested that the Minutes show that. Mr Hull refuted the suggestion that he was accusing Mr Dyla personally of blackmail, and that his intention had been to point out that the Council's action in this respect might be perceived as a form of blackmail

It was resolved to approve the Minutes of the June 8th meeting in their unamended form

4. Matters Arising

4(1) Item4(1) 8.6.09: Bus stop

Mr Hull and Mr Hubner both declared a personal interest as ORAC trustees

i. A response had been received from ORAC about the questionnaire in which several additional questions had been proposed for inclusion. These were considered at length. Most were felt to be the same questions as those on the Parish Council draft version, simply worded in a different way. A question about parking restrictions was inaccurate as the Parish Council had been informed that these would not be necessary unless a problem arose. A question about funding a shelter through addition to the council tax was also inaccurate as the Parish Council has some reserves put aside and grant funding should be available

The Chairman closed the meeting briefly to allow comments from the floor

It was noted that a suggestion from the floor to position the proposed shelter to the Old Rectory Gardens side of the telephone box should be given further consideration

It was resolved to send out the questionnaire in its current form. The Clerk to respond to ORAC explaining why their questions had not been included and inviting them to nevertheless issue the questionnaire in joint names as they had suggested

In order to have replies by the next Parish Council meeting in September the responses would need to be collected over the weekend of the 5th/6th September and so delivered 22nd/23rd August. Lewis Bloomfield to be asked to deliver the questionnaires (ORAC pay him £15 to deliver the Oracle and it was suggested that the Parish Council should do the same), responses to be collected by Councillors as follows: -

Mr Hubner	Ash Tree Close and Old Rectory Gardens
Mr Hewitson/Mr Dyla	The Street and The Causeway
Mr Burnett	Church Street, Tudor Court, Cedars Close
Mr Hull	Bulls Hall Road and outlying houses
Mr Owen	Barrack Lane, Castle Hill
Mr Chittock	Mill Road
Mr Cripps/Mr Miller	Redlingfield Road

ii. The Clerk suggested that the issue of the bus stop/shelter could be put up for discussion on the village website Discussion Forum to gauge reaction. All in favour

iii. The Clerk had received a letter from the Locality Budget Officer at Suffolk County Council asking for an update on the progress of the project as they were still holding £1000 from the late Councillor Clover's Locality Budget towards this. Clerk to respond

Now that a response had been received from ORAC the question of releasing the funds to them should have been addressed, but the Clerk had omitted to include this as an Agenda item. It was agreed to call a meeting next week to finalise this

4(2) Item 4(2) 8.6.09: Street lights

Alister Haveron from Morgan Est had attended a site meeting in the village with the Clerk and Mr Hewitson to review the cabling from pole to property on the street lights thought to have G39 conflict issues. In his opinion the cabling was insulated on most units so that the clearance needed was 0.9m rather than 1.5m and that left only two units with G39 issues, those being the light outside Cranley Cottages and the light outside Jubilee Heights. He had promised to send a written report but this had not yet been received

4(3) Item 4(3) 8.6.09: Dog waste bin

It was noted that this was now in place and arrangements had been made for emptying it. Mrs Hunter who had requested the bin had contacted the Clerk to thank the Parish Council, and Mr Hull was thanked for putting the bin up

4(4) Item 4(4) 8.6.09: Village Forum meeting

The date of the next Village Forum meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 19th August at 8pm. Mr Hewitson was now unable to attend, Mr Cripps or Mr Burnett to take his place with Mr Miller

4(5) Item 5(2) 8.6.09: Community Achievement Awards

There were no suggestions this year – it was felt that it would be appropriate to nominate someone next year when the new village hall was complete

4(6) Item 5(3) 11.5.09: Neighbourhood Watch scheme

Mr Hull reported that he and the other co-ordinators, Mrs Self and Mrs Hull, had visited houses in the village with the police officer in charge of Neighbourhood Watch on 22nd June to ask for support for the scheme. The response was overwhelmingly in favour so the scheme will proceed. The next step is to find sites for the signs that have to be put up

5. Correspondence

5(1) Correspondence for circulation – *SCC Passenger Transport Newsletter* July-October 2009; *Clerks & Councils Direct* July 2009 [NB feature on bus shelters p19-21]; MSDC Planning Enforcement Policy Update; Suffolk LINK newsletter

5(2) The Clerk had received a letter from Mid Suffolk about the dangers of unlicensed stretch limousines now that the Proms season was approaching. A poster had been placed on the noticeboard. It was suggested that it should appear on the website as well

6. Parish Paths Partnership

6(1) Report from Footpaths Warden

Mr Hewitson reported that the legal process was now underway with regard to FP24 and he could take no further action at present. Maintenance was ongoing on the footpaths as far as cutting back nettles, etc was concerned

7. Planning Matters

7(1) PA 1569/09 Proposed fencing, canopy and landscape scheme for pre-school garden, Occold Pre-School, Jubilee Hall

The plans were tabled and discussed. The height of the railings between the play area and the proposed development was queried. Along the rear boundary the railings are 1800mm high as a safety precaution because this runs alongside a public footpath, but the remainder are shown as 900mm. Councillors wondered whether the height should be increased to 1800mm at least part of the way along the shared pre-school garden/play area boundary to prevent someone accessing the pre-school garden from the footpath via the play area. It was decided to recommend approval subject to this requirement [Clerk has subsequently checked with the architect and the plans are correct – the height of the railings has been approved by Ofsted and the providers of the pre-school garden]

7(2) PA1642/09 Conservatory, Causeway Cottage, Occold

The plans were tabled and discussed. All in favour

8. Finance

8(1) The Clerk reported that the Annual Return had now been sent to the External Auditors following the internal audit by Mrs Crisp. In order to comply with audit requirements in the future it will be necessary to introduce new procedures regarding risk assessment, the register of assets and the internal auditor's report

A risk assessment document needs to be produced and reviewed annually. There are risks other than financial that need to be taken into consideration, such as the loss of financial data, change of personnel etc. Also the assets register should be reviewed and signed off annually. It was suggested that an appropriate time to do this would be at the September meeting as the insurance policy is due for renewal in October

In addition the internal auditor's report should be presented to the Parish Council and it was agreed that this should be done at the May meeting when the Annual Return is approved

On the subject of insurance the Clerk was asked to check that Mr Hewitson is covered by the Parish Council's insurance policy when he is carrying out work on the footpaths

8(2) Submitted for payment an invoice from Glasdon UK for dog waste bin £96.21+£14.43 VAT= £110.64. All in favour

8(3) Interest of £0.51 had been received on the Alliance Leicester account for June 2009

8(4) The Clerk had been informed of the rates for hiring the new village hall. These would be £5.50 per hour, ie £11 per (approx two hour) meeting, a total of £121 annually. A revised invoice would be sent for the remainder of the year in due course

9. Matters to be advised (at the Chairman's discretion)

9(1) The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Rural Coffee Caravan would be in the village again on the morning of Tuesday 21st July

9(2) A consultation document from the Ipswich Hospital Trust regarding becoming a foundation trust had been received. Unfortunately the deadline for comments was before the next Parish Council meeting. It was placed in the bundle for circulation

9(3) It was reported that the pub has now been boarded up – this is apparently to comply with the insurance policy of the building society which has now taken possession of it. There has been some local interest in purchasing it. County Councillor Stringer assured councillors that Mid Suffolk District Council had a strict policy with regard to retention of public houses and that therefore planning permission for change of use to a residential dwelling would not be granted for the property

9(4) It was reported that complaints had been received from some residents about gravel spilling out onto the highway from private drives. The Clerk was asked to check on the position with regard to responsibility for this

10. Date of next meeting is Monday 14th September 2009 at 8pm in the Village Hall

Meeting closed 10.10pm