

MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 13th November 2006 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr K Chittock, Mrs J Careford, Mr A Andrews, Mr S Hubner, Mr R Owen, Mr S Warnes.

County Councillor Clover was also present for the start of the meeting

Several residents interested in the planning application for a wind turbine (see Item 7(3)) and Mr Barry Woods (see Item 5(3)) were also present

1. Apologies had been received from Mr Hull and Mr Underwood, and also Footpaths Warden Mrs Welch

2. Reports from County and District Councillors

2(1) Report from County Councillor Jeremy Clover

- The County Council had held several road shows to gauge public opinion on the priorities for the budget. Members of the public had been asked to vote by putting coloured balls into tubes according to the area that they felt was the most important for future spending. The most popular option had turned out to be better health and well being.
- The preliminary results in the schools consultation seemed to indicate that the 2-tier system was most popular. This is perhaps not surprising as it represents maintaining the status quo for about two thirds of the county. Mr Clover favours this system himself as it feels that it is less disruptive than children moving school at 13, just before preparing for GCSEs
- Mr Clover is a member of the Health Scrutiny Committee. They had recently had a presentation from the new Chief Executive of the amalgamated Suffolk Primary Care Trusts. The move to one Trust should enable savings to be made. They are in a financial muddle and are now implementing a recovery plan. Mr Clover had also recently attended a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Ipswich Hospital Trust, which is currently £16m in the red. They are confident that their proposed recovery plan can save £11m in a year without any detrimental effect on patient care. This seems to imply that a lot of money has been wasted in previous years!
- Mr Clover had recently attended a “speed dating” session with local children. This was an opportunity for the younger members of the community to put across their views of what was important to them

Mr Owen asked why the Primary Care Trusts were not subject to a quarterly review of their finances rather than allowing a whole year to go by with an ever-increasing problem developing unchecked. Mr Clover answered that the County Council had in fact asked for a review of progress after 6 months

2(2) Report from District Councillor Charles Tilbury

Mr Tilbury had been unable to attend the meeting but had provided the Clerk with a report,

which she read out. A copy is attached to the Minutes

3. Minutes of previous Meeting held on 11th September 2006, which had previously been circulated to Councillors, were proposed for approval by Mr Warnes, seconded by Mr Owen. All in favour

4. Matters Arising

4(1) Item 3(1) 11/9/06: Street name signs

Contrary to the Minutes of the last meeting, the sign for Church Lane had not yet been installed, neither had the signs for Tudor Court. The Redlingfield Road sign was however in place. Clerk to chase

4(2) Item 3(2) 11/9/06: New dog-waste bin

The Clerk reported that the new bin has been delivered. There had not been any response to finding an alternative location for the old bin, apart from the suggestion to put it near the playing field somewhere. It was thought that this might encourage dog owners to use the field for exercising dogs when they should only be on the public footpath. It was decided to carry this forward to the next meeting

The Clerk reported that Mid Suffolk District Council were now offering to partially fund purchase of dog-waste bins by Parish Councils by buying in bulk. The Clerk had made enquiries and it was possible that the Parish Council might get a refund of part of the cost of the bin that has just been purchased, once the uptake by other parishes has been ascertained

4(3) Item 3(4) 11/9/06: Rural Coffee Caravan

The last visit was made in October and had an improved response on previous visits, with four people taking away information. The Caravan does not operate over the winter months, but had asked the Parish Council to consider whether further visits next Spring would be beneficial. It was agreed that they would be and that it took time for people to get to know about new services like this. Clerk to contact the organisation

4(4) Item 3(5) 11/9/06: War Memorial ownership and publication to commemorate war dead

The Clerk reported that she had now visited the Record Office but was not much nearer to establishing ownership of the War Memorial. However she did now have a date for its unveiling and a reference to a newspaper report of that ceremony to follow up. The collection by the East Suffolk War Memorial Committee had been to build a new wing at Ipswich Hospital and create a Roll of Honour, not for war memorials in the parishes

The publication "We Will Remember Them..." had been delivered to every house in the village before Remembrance Day, thanks to Mr Andrews. A copy accompanies these Minutes. It was suggested that a letter be sent to Alan Moore who had done the research for the publication, thanking him for his efforts. The Parish Council had been asked if it was in favour of posting the information on the website, both Mr Moore and Mr Andrews already having given their permission. All in favour

The final cost of producing and delivering the leaflet was £98.40 to be reimbursed to Mr Andrews (the Parish Council had authorised expenditure up to a maximum of £120 at the last meeting)

4(5) Item 3(6) 11/9/06: Memorial to Victor Gormer and bus service alterations

The Clerk now had a name to contact at Suffolk County Council to ask about moving the bus stop to the green. Once this had been decided we can look into a suitable memorial for Mr Gormer

4(6) Item 3(7) 11/9/06: Vacancy for a Councillor

Two candidates had put their names forward for co-option: Mr Bernard Dyla and Mr John Hewitson. All agreed that they were both excellent candidates and it was a pity that they could not both become Councillors. It was stressed that the unsuccessful candidate should not be discouraged from standing in May when elections are held as it was possible that other Councillors may step down at that time. There was also the possibility of a vacancy for Footpaths Warden soon, as Mrs Welch wanted to hand over to someone else before she possibly moves away from the village

Mr Warnes proposed and Mr Andrews seconded that a secret ballot should be held to determine which candidate should be co-opted. When the votes were counted there were 3 for each candidate. The Chairman used his casting vote to select Mr Dyla. Clerk to notify both candidates of the outcome and provide Mr Dyla with the necessary forms to fill in, etc

4(7) Item 10(1) 11/9/06: Ditch alongside B1077

It was noted that repairs have recently been carried out to this stretch of road, with a kerb being put in along the road edge. Mr Owen explained that this was not sufficient, as the width of the ditch is severely restricted due to the ground having been pushed in by heavy vehicles. He is of the opinion that the ditch should be piped with a large diameter pipe. Clerk to write to Gerald Clarke at SCC

4(8) Correspondence for circulation

Several Councillors had not seen the correspondence bundle again since the last meeting. It was agreed that everyone should make an effort to make sure it is passed around promptly

5. Correspondence

5(1) Correspondence for circulation – East Suffolk Mind *Annual Review 2006*; Suffolk Association of Local Councils *Annual Report 2005/6*; selection of Glasdon brochures; *St Elizabeth Hospice News* Autumn 2006; *A Guide to Suffolk ACRE's Projects and Services 2006/2007*; *Clerks & Councils Direct* November 2006; *EEAPTC News* first issue; Minutes of 2005 SALC AGM; NALC *Employment Briefing on Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006*; handouts from September's Mid Suffolk Parish Liaison Meeting; Diss, Thetford and District CAB *Annual Report & Accounts 2006* and leaflets

5(2) A letter had been received from Mid Suffolk District Council confirming that the number of councillors on Occold Parish Council is to remain at 9 following the Periodic Electoral Review

5(3) Local resident Mr Barry Woods had made a complaint to Suffolk County Council regarding the removal of the decorative Victorian ridge tiles from the school during recent work, and their replacement with a plain modern version. He would be meeting Mr Bill Smith Maintenance Manager, Resource Management Property from SCC on 22nd November 2006 and asked for the Parish Council to support his complaint

Councillors agreed that the complaint was a valid one as the appearance of the school was a distinctive feature of the village, especially because of its central position. Mr Chittock and possibly Mr Warnes would attend the meeting with Bill Smith. The Clerk also to attend to take notes. Clerk to write to Bill Smith to notify him and copy letter to Mr Woods

5(4) The anomaly regarding the naming of The Street/Church Street for houses between the Church and the B1077 was discussed. There is some confusion as to the correct name and various public utilities and delivery companies, etc are inconsistent. This has caused difficulties for some residents. Mr David Capey at Tonweya has apparently compiled a list of who uses which name. Mr Hubner informed the meeting that the definitive source should be the Post Office and it was agreed that the Clerk should start by contacting it to establish what name it thinks should be used

5(5) Comments had been received from a resident as to the state of the road restriction outside The Cedars in particular the poor marking of the road. Councillors did not see that there was a severe problem but agreed that all of the traffic calming white lines in the village could do with renovation. Clerk to contact SCC

5(6) A letter had been received from the Countryside Alliance asking for support in its campaign to save rural Post Offices. The meeting felt that this was probably a lost cause as so many of the Post Offices traditional functions were being replaced by electronic means dealing with customers directly

5(7) A letter had been received from SCC asking for the Parish Council's views on the provision of respite and day care services for the elderly. There was some emotional discussion about the loss of Hartismere Hospital as a local facility but it was suggested that the County Council could perhaps use the buildings for day care and respite facilities. It was felt that local government should provide these services, as it was not viable for voluntary or private sector organisations to run them in such a rural area without subsidy

5(8) A consultation document had been received from the Sizewell A & B Stakeholder Group concerning the future use of land at Sizewell A following decommissioning. Councillors felt that this is too far from this Parish to need a response

5(9) A consultation document had been received from Mid Suffolk District Council on its Draft Taxi Licensing Policy. Mr Hubner offered to have a look at it as he had had some experience of taxi licensing through work

5(10) Additional documentation in the form of information about two new sites had been received regarding SCC consultation on Minerals Specific Site Allocations Issues and Options Report (see Item 4(6) 11/9/06). No response necessary

6. Parish Paths Partnership

6(1) The Clerk had received information from SCC on the cost of opening the new footpath on land at Church Farm. This was estimated to have been about £5000, including £925 for bridges and their installation. Mr Andrews reported that he had asked SCC for a gate to be installed at the edge of the road to prevent children, dogs etc being able to run down the

sloping bridge into the path of traffic on the B1077

6(2) It was noted that bridge repairs had recently been carried out on Bridleway 8 from Benningham Grange to Bulls Hall Road

6(3) A site meeting had been held concerning the lagoon on the Red House Lane footpath between Mr Chittock, Mrs Welch and an officer from SCC Rights of Way. To be reported at the next meeting in January

7. Planning Matters

7(1) A copy of a report from Mid Suffolk Standards Committee regarding the attendance of parish councillors at pre-application planning site meetings had been received via SALC. This confirmed that there is no problem with parish councillors attending such meetings and contributing to the discussions. Representatives must not, of course, pre-empt any decision of the parish council, nor give unequivocal endorsement or otherwise of a proposal. Attending and contributing is part of the information gathering process for councillors. The Chairman of the Standards Cttee, Cllr Frost (who is also vice-chair of the Northern Area Planning Committee), positively advocates contributions from parish councillors at these meetings

7(2) The Clerk had received a note from the planning officer of a site meeting held at the barn north of The Firs, Mill Road on 5th October 2006 to discuss potential conversion to residential use (The report is attached to the Minutes). The site in question is outside the village envelope and as such a new build would not be acceptable. It was the planning officer's opinion that there was not enough substance of the original building remaining to merit conversion to a dwelling for residential use. However, it appears that a conversion for a holiday let might be allowable. Councillors were baffled by the difference between these two types of occupation, as the finished building would presumably be the same in either case! The distinction is apparently drawn on the grounds that a holiday let, in encouraging tourism, is beneficial to the rural economy and so can be encouraged in the countryside (ie outside village boundary). Councillors were of the opinion that a permanent dwelling might actually be more beneficial to the village community than a series of holidaymakers. It is not clear whether or not the owner, Mr Gamble, will now proceed with an application

7(3)

(i) Planning application 1676/06/FUL: Erection of domestic wind turbine on 9m mast at Willows, Dublin Road, Rishangles

Mrs Careford declared a prejudicial interest in the matter to be discussed, as she is a neighbour of the site of the proposed development. She left the meeting

The plans were tabled and discussed. The Clerk had been advised by the planning officer that the most relevant planning policy to be taken into consideration was CL24. This states that "wind turbines will not be permitted where their operation would result in a loss of amenity to nearby residential property and users of nearby rights of way". This is to be balanced against policy GP4 which encourages energy conservation

It was noted that the height of the proposed wind turbine (at 9m plus the radius of the blades, another 2.25m) is approximately twice that of the nearest house. This would make it very

visible from all directions. It was also noted that these machines generate a considerable amount of noise, and although the literature supplied with the application claims that this has been minimised in the selected model, it is to be remembered that the information is biased as it is provided by the supplier of the equipment. The hamlet of Dublin comprising less than a dozen houses is very quiet and the noise would therefore be more intrusive to residents than in a busier place. The meeting, whilst generally in favour of “green” methods of energy generation, did not believe that the amount of power that would be generated by this turbine was sufficient to outweigh the loss of amenity to nearby residential property

The meeting was closed briefly to allow comments from the floor. Most of those present were neighbours of the site of the proposal and were opposed to it

When the meeting reopened Mr Hubner proposed and Mr Warnes seconded that the Parish Council should recommend refusal. All in favour

(ii) Planning application 1565/06/FUL: Erection of two storey rear extension. Erection of porch at Willows, Dublin Road Occold

The applicant had submitted revised plans, apparently after discussion with the planning officer. These incorporated reductions to the width and length of the proposed extension, altering the pitch of the roof. The plans were tabled and discussed. Councillors felt that the proposal was still too large as it was out of proportion with the rest of the building and would lead to inappropriate massing in the locality. Mr Chittock recommended refusal for these reasons and Mr Hubner seconded his proposal. All in favour

Mrs Careford returned to the meeting

7(4) Application ref 2569/06/TPO: Remove branches from a yew overhanging boundary between 6 and 7 Old Rectory Gardens.

It was noted that permission had been granted. The Chairman had instructed the Clerk to defer to the Tree Officer’s opinion in this case which had arrived between meetings

7(5) It was noted that a Public Inquiry is to be held on Tuesday 5th December into the application by C&K Meats for change of use from industrial to abattoir and meat processing at Ex Lilley Construction, Mid Suffolk Business Park, Eye

7(6) It was noted that a new email system of notification of planning applications by MSDC to the Clerk was in place. The possibility of having the planning list sent to a second address for back-up purposes had been suggested. Mr Andrews was happy to act as back-up

7(7) A questionnaire had been received on Local Development Framework “Key Service Centres” Report – unfortunately deadline for responses was 27th October

7(8) Information had been received from CPRE on its campaign to alter the East of England Plan. The Parish Council had been sent tear-off postcards to complete and forward to the Minister. Several Councillors took these to complete

8. Meetings

8(1) The Clerk reported that after the last meeting she had been unable to secure places on the visit to the MRF recycling facility as all the tours for councillors had been full. However it was possible to arrange an independent tour for the New Year. They can accommodate up to 8 people, the tours are free and include tea and biscuits. The Clerk was asked to go ahead and arrange a date with the organiser

8(2) A delegate was needed to attend Mid Suffolk North Committee Meeting on Wednesday 22nd November 2006 at Gislingham Village Hall, 7pm for 7.30pm

8(3) Handouts had been received from the Mid Suffolk Parish Liaison Meeting held in September. These had been placed in the bundle of correspondence for circulation

8(4) Information had been received from SALC on a two-day training course for councillors to be held on 27th and 28th November 2006

9. Finance

9(1) Submitted for payment an invoice from Glasdon for new dog litter bin of £229.54 + £40.16 VAT = £269.70. Approved at July meeting (see Item 4(2) 25.7.06)

9(2) Submitted for payment expenses incurred by Footpath Warden Mrs Welch: £9.99 for oil and £12.00 for fuel, totalling £21.99. Mr Warnes proposed and Mr Hubner seconded payment. All in favour

9(3) Submitted for payment expenses incurred by Parish Clerk for purchase of Poppy Wreath £30. Approved at last meeting (see Item 9(8) 11.9.06)

9(4) Receipt of £2000 precept for second six months of year from Mid Suffolk District Council was noted

9(5) It was noted that insurance cover with Zurich Municipal via SuffolkACRE had been renewed with effect from 1st October 2006

9(6) It was noted that the parish precept requirements for 2007/8 to be submitted to Mid Suffolk by 31st January 2007

9(7) It was noted that interest of £16.72 for September 2006 and £17.35 for October 2006 had been earned on the Alliance Leicester account

9(8) It was noted that the Audit had been completed. The auditor had raised a couple of points to be dealt with. Carry forward to next meeting

9(9) An appeal for a donation had been received from Diss CAB. Clerk to send usual acknowledgment

10. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held at **7.30pm** on **Monday 15th January 2007** in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed