

## MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr K Chittock, Mrs J Careford, Mr S Hubner, Mr B Hull, Mr B Mann, Mr M Underwood, Mr S Warnes.  
Also present County Councillor Mr Jeremy Clover, and for part of the meeting PC Jon Eaves

**1. Apologies** had been received from Mr Owen, and from Mr Hubner who was on his way but would be late arriving

**2. Minutes of previous Meetings** held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2006, which had previously been circulated, were proposed for approval by Mr Warnes, seconded by Mr Mann. All in favour

### **3. Matters Arising**

**3(1)** Item 3(1) 7/11/05: Highways matters

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Gerald Clarke at SCC Highways after the last meeting about the three outstanding matters to be dealt with

(i) The hedge at The Pightle Bungalow – Mr Clarke had looked at the hedge and felt that as it had been trimmed back it was no longer bad enough to need anything more done

(ii) The drain under the B1077 had been jetted and there was a section of pipe to be renewed. This has recently been done

(iii) Pavement at Ash Tree Close should have been repaired. Mr Underwood confirmed that this had been done

### **4. Report from Councillor Clover**

**4(1)** A140 speed limits

The County Council had adopted the blanket 50mph limit on the A140 but it was felt that the changes between 30mph and 40mph were confusing and these were being looked at. Mr Clover is pressing for junction improvements to be made at Stoke Ash and Thorndon (White Horse)

**4(2)** Register of Members' Interests

There has been discussion as to whether it would be beneficial to post the Register on the internet. The review panel had recently suggested increases to members' allowances but these would be put on hold because of the current financial situation, which is going to necessitate cuts in services

**4(3)** There is a need for reorganisation of the Strategic Health Authorities the Primary Care Trusts and the Ambulance Trusts, but Mr Clover is resistant to "regionalisation" as is happening in the police force

**4(4)** There is discussion about organisation of schooling in the county. At present there are both 2 and 3 tier systems in operation. Falling numbers on the school roll mean that some places will need to be lost but if this means closure of village primary schools it will be very unpopular

**4(5)** Councillor Clover reminded the Parish Council that he has a lump sum in the form of

a Locality Budget to spend in his ward, which he prefers to distribute on the basis of population. Occold could have about £550 if there are any small projects that require funding (see Item 11 below)

**4(6)** Suffolk County Council received a 2.9% increase in funding from central government compared with 6.5% last year. They are unwilling to increase the Council tax and besides there is a threat of capping for those councils that do increase by more than 5%. Cutbacks in services are therefore needed and there will be tough decisions to be made. All departments are looking for ways to save money, and the County Council is asking for suggestions from the public

**4(7)** Social Services have been awarded 3\* status (an improvement on the 1\* status of two years ago) which will mean a reduction in the number of inspections etc that they are subjected to

## **5. Correspondence**

**5(1)** For circulation - *Clerks & Councils Direct* January 2006; publication from the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister *Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future; The Local Councillor* December 2005; briefing from NALC on The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004; Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Report and Accounts 2004-5; Diss, Thetford & District Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Report and Accounts 2005 and leaflet *How can we help?*; letter from Suffolk Preservation Society and the Suffolk Building Preservation Trust Ltd; leaflet about *Trickster the Musical*; leaflet from CPS and Association of Chief Police Officers *Householders and the Use of Force Against Intruders*; *Key Saver* Newsletter Autumn 2005; Forthcoming Bus Service Changes; *Suffolk Hedgerow Survey Newsletter* November 2005; *Cutting Crime in Suffolk* Annual Report of the Probation Service in Suffolk

**5(2)** Notification had been received from Mid Suffolk District Council Electoral Services that co-option of a replacement Councillor to fill the vacancy could now go ahead. Only one applicant had come forward: 'Andy' Andrews. Mr Mann proposed and Mr Hull seconded that he be co-opted. 4 Councillors voted in favour, 2 abstained. Clerk to notify Mr Andrews and send him forms etc for filling in

**5(3)** The Clerk read out a letter from Suffolk Preservation Society about its campaign to improve local consultation in the planning process called "Whose Master's Voice". Mr Underwood proposed and Mr Warnes seconded that the Parish Council sign up to the statement. All in favour

**5(4)** It was noted that copies of the confirmed order regarding the addition of a footpath from Church Farm to Eye Road to the definitive map had been received. Mr Hull declared a personal interest in this matter. There was concern amongst Councillors that so much money had been spent on opening up a footpath last used apparently in 1824, whereas other paths in the area already on the definitive map cannot be used because they have been obstructed. For example the footpath to Thorndon which has a lagoon across it has made no progress. Clerk to speak to Sue Welch, Footpaths Warden, and possibly also to Katrina Maddams, Thorndon Parish Clerk if it is in Thorndon. To be discussed at the March meeting

**5(5)** A request for information had been received from the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project and Mid Suffolk Voluntary Organisations Forum. Clerk to complete questionnaires. As far as paying for cost of visit, Councillors suggested that the project apply for a donation as other charities do

**5(6)** The Clerk read out a letter from SCC about changes to height restrictions at Household Waste Recycling Centres. These are to be raised to 2m to make it easier for drivers of people carriers and 4x4 vehicles to access the sites

**5(7)** Information had been received from SALC about Spring Clean Suffolk Week 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2006 – a campaign to reduce litter in the county ready for summer visitors

**5(8)** A questionnaire had been received from SALC about Emergency Planning arrangements in the parish. As we currently have none in place, the Clerk is to enquire of SALC if there is any guidance available for putting an Emergency Plan together. To be discussed at the March meeting

**5(9)** Information had been received from SCC about carriageway repairs to Stoke Road between Kerrison and the A140 junction

## **6. Meetings**

**6(1)** Mr Chittock had been unable to attend the SALC Mid Suffolk North and South meeting at Mendlesham in November

**6(2)** Information had been received from the charity SAFE (Safer Activities For Everyone) about a consultation day to be held at Kerrison on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January in connection with the Safeguarding Children Partnership. Mrs Careford took the details and may attend

Mr Hubner arrived

## **7. Report from PC Eaves**

- Since he had last reported to the Parish Council in September 2005 there had been 2 burglaries in the Parish. The first was the theft of fishing gear from a garage in Redlingfield Road. Later that day 2 men were stopped in Rickinghall for acting suspiciously and were found to have the stolen tackle in their van. They were arrested and search warrants obtained for two addresses in Eye where further stolen goods were retrieved. The second burglary involved the theft of about £10000 worth tools from Lowgate Garage. It is thought that this could be the work of the same group. Property from a Burglary in Thorndon was found nearby and recovered
- A man had been arrested in Framsdon in connection with thefts from unsecured cars in the area. However these were still continuing
- In Eye cars on the car parks have been broken into at night
- PC Eaves now has his speed gun and has started using it locally. There is still a question over whether the 20mph limit is enforceable. PC Eaves to double-check. His intention is to be highly visible when using the gun so as to act as a deterrent
- Fly tipping has been a problem recently. If anyone sees rubbish being dumped they should pass on registration numbers. Mid Suffolk should be called to get the rubbish cleared away as soon as possible to prevent it building up

## **8. Finance**

**8(1)** The donations to be made to charities under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 were discussed. It was felt to be important to give to those charities that actually benefit residents of Occold. Therefore Mr Hull proposed and Mr Warnes seconded that donations be made the same as last year, except that instead of giving to the Borderhoppa service £30 should be donated to Mid Suffolk Citizen's Advice Bureau. All in favour. The following donations therefore to be made: -

£50	Occold Pre-School
£35	Hartismere Hospital League of Friends
£30	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service
£30	East Anglian Air Ambulance
£30	Mid Suffolk Citizen's Advice Bureau
£20	Eye Volunteer Centre

**8(2)** It was noted that the completed audit had been received. The only comment had been that the transfer of £5000 being included meant that the expenditure and income had each been overstated by £5000. Submitted for payment an invoice from Lubbock Fine for audit services of £120 + £21 vat = £141. Mr Hubner proposed and Mrs Careford seconded that payment be made. All in favour

**8(3)** The receipt of £63.80 from Henman's charity was noted. There was some discussion as to how this money should be used, and whether it could be spent to benefit individual parishioners. Clerk to check on statutory powers for next time, but for this year Mr Warnes proposed and Mr Chittock seconded that the money be added to the Village Hall fund in the Alliance Leicester account. All in favour

**8(4)** It was noted that acknowledgement had been received from Occold PCC for reimbursement of grass-cutting and hedge-trimming costs in the cemetery. Mr Hubner informed the Council that the cost of upkeep of the cemetery would be higher next year because the hedges would need cutting back as well as the grass cutting

**8(5)** The Clerk's salary for 2005/6 was discussed. Mr Hubner declared a personal interest. Moving up to SCP18 on the scale the new part-time rate with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April is 8.387p. For 180 hours a year this gives a figure of £1510 to the nearest £10. The Clerk was concerned that she did not actually do 180 hours work: meetings seemed to be generally shorter now, and there was not as much correspondence to reply to. Mrs Careford proposed and Mr Warnes seconded that the Clerk be paid £1510 for 2005/6, and that a review of her hours be made for next year's pay award. All in favour

**8(6)** The cost of having a water meter installed was looked at. Essex and Suffolk Water had supplied a figure of £256. As the current minimum charge for an unmetered supply is only £70 it was agreed to keep the existing arrangement

**8(7)** The insurance policy was discussed. Although not due for renewal until October, a large increase in premium might be expected in line with other insurance companies. Also the replacement value of streetlights etc will need to be increased as the policy is not index-linked. However, this element of the premium is calculated at 1.19% of the value insured so any increase should be relatively small

**8(8)** The Budget and Expenditure for 2005/6 was reviewed. After some discussion Mr Warnes proposed and Mr Underwood seconded a budget for 2006/7 of £5000 made up as follows: -

Administration	£2500
Street lighting	£ 440
Charity donations	£ 250
Graveyard	£ 700
Church & Chapel	£1000
Conservation (P3)	£ 30
Water rate	£ 80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5000</b>

All in favour

As there are substantial reserves in the account Mr Hubner proposed and Mr Warnes seconded

that the precept be for £4000 in order to reduce the reserves to about £5000 over the course of the year. All in favour

It was commented that the fact that the Parish Council element of the Council Tax has been reduced by 20% should be included in the next village newsletter

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

**9(1)** Mr Chittock suggested that the locality budget might be used to finance part of the new village hall project. ORAC are currently looking to reapply for planning permission for the new design and it is possible that the money could be used towards this. Clerk to contact ORAC to find out expected costs and then write to Mr Clover

**10. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at **7.30pm** on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006** in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed 9.25pm