

## MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2007 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr K Chittock, Mr J Hewitson, Mr R Owen. Mr S Hubner would be a little late arriving

**1. Apologies** had been received from Mrs Careford, Mr Andrews, Mr Dyla and Mr Hull

**2. Minutes of the previous Meeting** held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007, had previously been circulated to Councillors. Although unable to be present at the meeting Mr Andrews had indicated to the Clerk that he was not happy with Item 4(2) of the Minutes which recorded the discussion about a complaint made to the Standards Board, and in particular a letter he had sent to that body. Councillors suggested that the Minutes should be amended to reflect that Mr Andrews' letter had been sent prior to the Parish Council meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> May and a sentence added to emphasise that the letter expressed Mr Andrews' own opinions and not those of the Parish Council. With these amendments Mr Owen proposed and Mr Hewitson seconded approval of the Minutes. All in favour

### **3. Report from County Councillor Jeremy Clover**

Mr Clover's report consisted of a review of the 2006/7 Revenue and Capital Outturn for Suffolk County Council

The County Council has a revenue budget of £366.3m, an underspend of £5.4m equating to 1.5%. The majority of the underspend is in the Environment and Transport Department (£3.5m), the greater portion being in the waste budget ie £2.36m due to an underspend of £487k on consultants fees, and a specific grant for recycling fridges, TV and computer screens and a reduced tonnage of landfill. A mild winter accounted for an underspend on winter maintenance of £324k, however this money is ring fenced in case of a severe winter  
Children and Young Persons managed an underspend of £800k mainly due to receipts from the Learning and Skills Council of £655k

Public Protection managed an underspend of £500k due to the new financial arrangements linked to the Fire Brigade pension contributions

Resource Management had an underspend of £400k due to the reduction in running costs of Council buildings and extra income earned by the design and maintenance section

### **4. Matters Arising**

**4(1)** Item 3(1) 14.5.07: Street name signs

The new signs for Church Street and The Street were now in place. A small piece had been put on the website to explain why the Parish Council had requested these

**4(2)** Item 3(3) 14.5.07: Ditch alongside B1077

A letter had been received from Suffolk County Council confirming that the alignment of the new kerbing would be altered to turn in at the ends of the 'run', and that the County Council would carry out works necessary to re-establish the ditch and make the verge safe if it collapsed due to traffic. General 'day-to-day' maintenance of the ditch remains the responsibility of the adjacent landowner.

**4(3)** Item 4(6) 14.5.07: Rural Coffee Caravan visit

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Rural Coffee Caravan would be in the village on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July between 10am and 12noon. Posters had been put up, slips delivered to residents and the date publicised on the website and in Oracle

**4(4) Item 9(1) 14.5.07: Gift for Sue and Tiny Welch**

SALC had confirmed that a gift could be purchased using the powers of s.111 of the Local Government Act 1972. A sum of £40 had previously been agreed. Councillors thought that walking sticks made from local wood would be an appropriate gift but they needed to be 'fitted' so would need Sue and Tiny to be present. Mr Chittock agreed to speak to them about arranging something

He also reported that Mrs Welch was very pleased that the gate at the top of Redhouse Lane had been removed by HLS. There was an area at the end of the lane that could possibly be cleared to make a picnic site

Mr Hubner arrived

**4(5) Item 3(2) 14.5.07: Bus stop**

The Clerk had received a photograph from Graham Smith at the County Council showing a typical raised kerb bus stop. This had been forwarded to ORAC for consideration at a recent committee meeting. The length of the raised kerb would be 2.7m and with the sloping ends back to normal kerb height this would result in a hardstand area of 4.6m x 1.5m. ORAC is of the view that this would contribute to urbanisation of the village and could lead to children with cycles and/or skateboards congregating at the green, and as such its committee could not support the proposal.

Mr Hubner confirmed that the land at the village green was owned by three trustees on behalf of ORAC, in the same way as the playing field. One of the original trustees, Mr Reginald Grey, had acquired the green and seems to have gifted it to ORAC at some time

Mr Smith had also suggested to the Clerk that an alternative location for the bus stop on the other side of the road could be the verge outside The Beeches, rather than the pub car park. This would require 6.5m of kerbing, including 2.7m of raised kerb

The Council believed that creating these two large areas of hardstanding was inappropriate in the village location

Mr Chittock proposed and Mr Hewitson seconded that the relocation of the bus stops should no longer be pursued. All in favour. Clerk to write to the County Council and to ORAC

**4(6) Item 4(2) 14.5.07: Complaint to Standards Board for England**

The Standards Board had referred the case to the Monitoring Officer at Mid Suffolk District Council, Mr Ian Rickard, for investigation. Mr Hubner had spoken to Mr Rickard about a week prior to the meeting and an investigating officer, a retired Councillor, had now been appointed. He will have 5 to 6 weeks to file a report to the Mid Suffolk Audit [?] Committee, which then passes on a recommendation to the Standards Board. Mr Rickard indicated that it was very unlikely that the Committee would overturn any recommendation made by the investigating officer

**4(7) Item 8(2) 14.5.07: Review of Clerk's Contract of Employment**

Mr Warnes had offered to look at the terms of the new model contract at the last meeting, just before he died. Mr Owen had collected the papers and returned them to the Clerk. To be considered at the next meeting

## **5. Correspondence**

**5(1)** Correspondence for circulation – *The Local Councillor* Summer 2007; *Suffolk's Environment Monitoring Report for 2005/6* summary; *Mid Suffolk Arts Programme 2007*; Mid Suffolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options Summary leaflet; School Organisation Review letter from Leader of Suffolk County Council and newsletter; Forthcoming bus service changes 215; *Inspire East* e-newsletter; Glasdon literature about seats and waste bins; copy of letter from Mid Suffolk District Council to Alistair Darling MP about closure of Post Offices; copy of NALC Chief Executive's Report on Local Government Bill; copy of letter from SALC submitted in response to consultation on Unitary Status for Ipswich Borough Council; leaflet from Suffolk Strategic Partnership to respond to Community Strategy Consultation; *Clerks & Councils Direct* July 2007

**5(2)** A letter had been received from the Returning Officer giving the go ahead to co-opt a replacement Councillor to fill the vacancy arising from the death of Mr Warnes. No one had yet come forward to express an interest in the post. Councillors to canvas for applicants and Clerk to put up some posters

**5(3)** A letter had been received from SCC about the outcome of the Mobile Library Review. Routes had been revised as a result of the review and would come into effect towards the end of July. Publicity about new times and stops would be following soon

**5(4)** A letter had been received from Suffolk County Council asking for help in publicising the work of the Community Safety Unit in combatting anti-social behaviour. They would like to include pieces in local publications. Clerk to pass on contact details for Oracle and also the website

**5(5)** An email had been received from SCC about a review of passenger transport. The Clerk had forwarded this to Andy Andrews for his input, and he had included a piece in the latest edition of Oracle

**5(6)** Guidance on the new Code of Conduct had been received from the Standards Board for England. A copy was given to each Councillor present. Clerk to make sure absent Councillors also get their copies

**5(7)** Invitation had been received from SALC to enter their Newsletter of the Year 2007 competition. Clerk to send in required copies of Oracle

**5(8)** A letter had been received from SCC outlining the proposed changes to the future structure of the County Council, which are to be debated by the council on 12<sup>th</sup> July

**5(9)** Mid Suffolk District Council had sent notification that the Best Value Performance Plan 2007-8 was now available. Copies are available for public inspection at Customer Service Directs centres (Needham Market, Stowmarket and Eye) and in libraries, and the document can be downloaded from the District Council website

## **6. Parish Paths Partnership**

### **6(1) Report from Footpaths Warden**

Mr Hewitson explained that owing to a problem with his Achilles tendon he had been unable to do any walking of the paths since he took over in May. However, work had continued due to Mr and Mrs Welch's efforts, and all paths had been cut at least once. There is a guided walk to Eye on Thursday evening

Mr Owen reported that the new bridge from Mr Hull's land onto the B1077 is becoming very overgrown with brambles, etc, indicating that the route is in fact very little used, if at all. Mr Hewitson to contact SCC to see if it can be cut back

**6(2)** A letter had been received from SCC about the Review of the Public Rights of Way Hierarchy and changes to area boundaries. Most Rights of Way in Occold have been categorised as Priority 1 which means they are given priority for repairs, cutting back undergrowth, etc. The area boundaries for the responsibilities of the rights of way officers have been changed. Occold is the responsibility of Claire Prime who covers an area from Occold as far west as Lakenheath and Mildenhall. Glyn French oversees the Western area, of which Occold is a part. Mr Hewitson took the correspondence for his files

**6(3)** A letter had been received from Mid Suffolk District Council about a proposed Walking Festival in 2008. They are looking for support for the idea and suggestions of walks that could be featured. Mr Hewitson took the correspondence to respond on behalf of the Parish Council

### **7. Planning Matters**

**7(1)** PA 1477/07 Tractor shed/ Workshop for a pig farm; Poplar Hall Farm, Benningham Green Occold

The proposals were tabled and discussed. Mr Hubner proposed and Mr Owen seconded that the Parish Council recommend approval. All in favour

**7(2)** PA1595/07 Proposed re-roofing to part of school roof; Occold Primary School

This application relates to the part of the school roof that was not replaced last summer, and includes the proposal to replace the plain ridge tiles with reproduction ones similar in appearance to the original Victorian ones on the whole roof. As the Parish Council had previously voted on this issue the Clerk had already responded to the application with the Parish Council's recommendation for approval

**7(3)** In order to publicise the new national planning application scheme there will be a visit by the Planning Portal Bus to Stowmarket on Thursday July 12<sup>th</sup>

**7(4)** Details had been received of the Local Development Framework consultation on Core Strategy Preferred Options (deadline for submissions was 2<sup>nd</sup> July). Occold has been categorised as a "secondary village" and as such is seen as "a village unsuitable for growth but capable of taking development for local needs only"

**7(5)** Mr Chittock asked about the current status of two planning applications, namely the driveway created through the woodland at the barn conversion on Benningham Green, and the extension at The Willows in Dublin. Clerk to check on both of these and report back. Mr Owen voiced concern at the presence of an unbunded diesel tank at the Benningham Green site which had previously been brought to the District Council's attention

## **8. Meetings and Training**

**8(1)** There had been a Community Open Day at Mid Suffolk on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 10am –4pm

**8(2)** Information had been received from SALC on various training courses including one for new councillors. Mr Hewitson took the details to check on future dates

## **9. Finance**

**9(1)** The appointment of a new cheque signatory to replace Mark Underwood was considered. Mr Chittock proposed that Mr Hewitson should be the third signatory. All in favour

**9(2)** It was noted that the Annual Return had been submitted for Audit. One of the current requirements is that a regular review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit takes place. It was proposed by Mr Hubner seconded by Mr Chittock that in future this should be done annually when the Budget is set at the January meeting. All in favour

**9(3)** It was noted that interest of £21.21 had been received for May 2007 on Alliance Leicester account

**9(4)** It was noted that appeals had been received from Age Concern and East Anglian Air Ambulance. Clerk to acknowledge

## **10. Report from District Councillor Charles Tilbury**

Mr Tilbury gave his report to the meeting. A summary is attached to the Minutes

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

**11(1)** Mr Owen proposed and Mr Chittock seconded that a donation of £50 should be given in memory of Mr Warnes to a charity of the Warnes' choice. All in favour. Mr Owen to confirm which charity and get back to the Clerk

**11(2)** There had not yet been any contact with the new Community Police Officer, believed to be PC Nick Emerick. Mr Chittock was still intending to visit Debenham Police Station to introduce himself, Clerk to make contact to inform him of dates of Parish Council meetings. Also a letter should go to the Chief Inspector to raise the point that HLS demonstrations are policed from Eye, but that Occold now comes under Debenham police station, and that the Parish Council would like to be informed of any protests at HLS

**11(3)** The Environment Agency had been in Occold on the Friday prior to the meeting as a result of a phone call from Mr Andrews about the smell of fuel in the ditch near the cemetery. The Clerk had spoken to the two representatives who informed her that they believed that there was a leak somewhere in Old Rectory Gardens but that they could not establish which property the fuel was coming from

**12. Date of next meeting** is Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Meeting closed 9.15pm