

## MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 8pm on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr B Hull (in the Chair), Mr R Burnett, Mrs M Grange, Mr S Hubner,  
Mr J Hewitson, Mr R Owen

### **1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies had been received from Mr Chittock (on emergency call-out), Mr Cripps (on holiday) and Mr Miller (family commitments)

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

#### **2(1) County Councillor Andrew Stringer gave his report to the meeting: -**

##### New Scrutiny Arrangements

I reported to your last meeting that the County Council were looking into how we were going to scrap the existing scrutiny system and replace it with something a little more fit for purpose

We have had a meeting regarding any proposed new arrangements.

One idea I am hoping to make sure does not see the light of day, is the idea to pay every member of the new scrutiny committee (10 members) a special responsibility allowance of £3600.00 per year to sit on this panel. I felt in these times of austerity we should set an example, and to pay extra allowances for a member to sit on a panel will inevitably open a complete can of worms regarding all committee places

##### New Strategic Direction

Last week we took the vote that agreed that we have found substantial “community capacity” in our County to be able to move forward with “divesting” our services. We have noticed how ever a distinct change in language and attitude regarding this issue from those at the top of the tree at S.C.C. during my now quarterly meeting with the Chief, she did suggest that using the word “Divest” may have been a mistake! During the national press interest in this issue the County Council were very gung ho regarding the potential of “outsourcing” every service, we have now had a mellowing of this position, now we have entered a time of sober reflection I trust this will generate more light than heat, There undoubtedly is capacity to save money and make services more responsive and accountable, In pursuing this we must build from the grass roots up and not impose from the top down, I think this message may now at last being listened to

##### Demand Responsive Bus Set To Launch

The County Council has launched a demand responsive Bus service for the Upper Gipping area. This new service will be able to be booked by telephone to enable passengers to access more services by public transport. It is envisaged that passengers will telephone to book a space on the 12-seater bus to connect to out of range transport services from e.g. Mendlesham, Occold, Debenham or Stowmarket Station. Contact 01449 616000. This service went live yesterday (A leaflet about the service was placed in the bundle of correspondence for circulation)

### John Peel Centre

As reported to the last meeting, the John Peel Centre had been selected to be televised on 25<sup>th</sup> of November for a people's millions bid (£50,000.00) I am delighted to report that with over 11000 votes we won! This means that the building work for phase one and two can now progress, allowing the building can come into use again early next year. Thank you to everyone that supported this project so far. We will also be informed early in the New Year if we have been successful with getting through to the next round of a £500,000.00 grant from Biffa.

### **2(2) PC Andy Pursehouse gave the Community Police Officer report to the meeting:-** Reported Crimes

There have been no reported crimes in the Parish of Occold since our last report.

### English Defence League – Letters to Local Councils

The English Defence League has been writing to Councils regarding Christmas and the in the context of dropping the word Christmas and using an alternative name for the celebrations. If you receive such a letter would you please contact the Police immediately and minimise the handling of the letter in order to try to retain forensic integrity.

### Be a Good Neighbour

Age UK is calling on people to keep an eye out for older family and friends/neighbours during cold weather. Vulnerable older people are more susceptible to the cold, so the charity urges people to show community spirit by checking on friends, relatives and neighbours during the cold winter months. For more information, call Age UK free advice line on 0800 169 65 65 or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### Crime Prevention

- Buildings

With Christmas only a few weeks away please ensure presents and other valuable items are stored out of view and doors and windows are kept secure. Presents are an attraction to thieves who do not take a holiday at Christmas and who are on the lookout for easy pickings.

- Vehicles

Please even in your driveway remember to make sure your vehicle is locked and remove items of value and do not leave anything on display. If you are out and about shopping do not leave items on show but lock them in the boot out of sight.

- Pedestrians

If you are out and about on foot, **be seen**, wear something reflective and light clothing if possible. Be aware that with the onset of winter surfaces underfoot can become very slippery especially when covered with leaves or affected by ice.

### Hare Coursing

Please be aware that there have been a number of instances of Hare Coursing recently and we encourage everyone who sees anything suspicious to contact us immediately via 999

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION OR ARE SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING  
REPORT IT ON 01473 613500 and IF YOU THINK A CRIME IS BEING COMMITTED  
ALWAYS DIAL 999

## HOW ARE WE DOING

Below are some facts and figures relating to THE SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

### *Priorities*

- Along with our partners, we are committed to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour across the county. Together we have developed Minimum Standards of service for victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour, ensuring a high level of service is provided across the county.

The current Priorities for Mid Suffolk Central are:-

- Carry out speed checks in Stonham Aspal and Thorndon. - we are involving the community in educating motorists through work with schools, Parish and District Councils.
- Resolve Anti Social behaviour at Wells Way play area, Debenham - we are working with the community, Parish Council and Lawrence Homes to resolve issues. We are also working to identify a site for the provision of a Youth Shelter for older youths.
- Investigate improving road safety in the area of Stonham Aspal Primary School – together with other agencies we are looking at road/pavement layouts and other possibilities.

### *Efficiency.*

- We have made changes to the opening hours of public enquiry desks at police stations across the county to better suit local needs. The opening hours are shown on a separate attachment.

## Have Your Say

**The Community Priority Setting Meeting** is now open to the public and is where our priorities for the following month will be set, please come along and raise any issues. The next meeting is on **26<sup>th</sup> January 2011**, at Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham, IP14 6QN. This meeting starts at 7.00pm and finishes at 8pm. All members of the Parish Council as well as the public are invited to attend when they can bring any issues/concerns to the meetings attention.

Please contact us to find out when later meetings are, alternatively the information is on our website.

## Quality of service

If you would like to tell us your views on the service that you have received from us or just to say how nice it is to see a Police Officer in your village, please let us know. We appreciate all feedback & comments from residents within our SNT area.

### Contact us

Tel: 01473 613500 & ask to speak to the Mid Suffolk Central Team

E-mail: [midsuffcentral.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:midsuffcentral.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk)

Website: [www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/midsuffolkcentral](http://www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/midsuffolkcentral) - please visit our website which is updated regularly

The officers also brought to the attention of councillors the fact that they are able to supply padlock alarms and other crime prevention equipment at very reasonable cost. The padlock alarms cost £10 and are designed to give out a 110dB noise when moved to act as a deterrent to potential thieves and are suitable for use on oil tanks, sheds, trailers etc. Anyone interested in purchasing a padlock or other items should contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team at Debenham as above

Mr Hull said that he would like to attend the next Community Priority Setting meeting to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January. It was agreed that the area of most concern in the village is still speeding. The Clerk was asked to write to the SNT requesting that Occold be considered for speed checks when priorities are set. The problem seems most noticeable early in the morning, between about 7.30am and 9am. It was suggested that any parishioners who are able to give registration numbers of vehicles known to present a problem are encouraged to pass this information to the Clerk for collation

### **2(3) District Councillor Charles Tilbury gave his report to the meeting: -**

#### Merger with Babergh District Council

The public will have an opportunity to vote on the proposed merger in a Local Poll in May 2011, to coincide with the next council elections.

#### Comprehensive Spending Review and impact on Budget Planning for 2011/12

Local government faces some of the biggest cuts in the public sector, with a 28% reduction in real terms in grant funding to councils over the next four years. While this represents an annual average reduction of 7%, it is in fact front-loaded with a cut in formula grant of about 10% in the next financial year.

Councils that freeze their council tax will receive government grant equivalent to an increase in 2.5%. That is clearly something worth getting, but in order to do so (and deal with the higher than expected 10% reduction in funding) it will require us to make additional savings of £200,000, on top of those already budgeted for (of over £1m).

#### Thornham Walks

The summer months saw a return of large numbers of visitors which indicates that this important countryside facility will continue to flourish. Revenue from car parking is an important contribution along with the organised activities for all ages, so if you want Thornham to continue to operate please make use of it. The second round of a lottery bid has been submitted for a play area to be built at Thornham and will provide an added attraction for visiting families.

#### Pest Control

Suffolk County Council has awarded the contract to Mitie and Mid Suffolk District Council has been recommended to transfer its Pest Control Service to this contractor.

### Waste & recycling

Mid Suffolk residents are to be congratulated on their support in helping the county as a whole to raise the recycling level to 50%. The next target, of 60% by 2015, will be harder to achieve, but we still intend to go for it .

Recycling information is not always clear, with packaging information often contrary to the message published by the Council. In order to redress this we plan to distribute (with the new collection calendar) information stickers to be placed inside recycling bin lids to remind residents, new and old, of the “do’s and don’ts” of recycling.

It is intended to keep the amount of disruption over the Christmas and New Year period to a minimum, with a continuous, unchanged service operating up to and including December 31. The new year will then see all collections move forward one day, e.g. with Monday’s collection moving to Tuesday, etc., and the contractor working on Saturday January 8 in order to catch up, which will of course be necessary given the greatly increased volumes of rubbish accumulating over the holiday season.

A comment on the household sites is in order as it has been widely remarked that recent changes are not particularly user-friendly. In response to feedback, the County has recognised these problems and plans to implement a number of changes, which we shall be monitoring.

### Waste enforcement

To date, fly tipping incidents are 93 fewer than last year, although twice as many offenders have been dealt with. The down trend may in part be due to the recession, but also to our zero tolerance policy and the vigorous efforts of David Abbott, our Waste Enforcement Officer, who is undertaking and leading training with other partners and agencies in all forms of enforcement and prosecution. All this is saving the Council money which was going to outside agencies to prosecute on our behalf.

### High Street History

An empty shop in Stowmarket, 56 Ipswich Street, will be transformed as part of the BBC’s Turn Back Time – High Street History series. Residents will be able to drop in and find out how Stowmarket’s high street has changed in the last 50 years, and guess what they will be able to buy there in 50 years’ time. Along with displays of goods from the past and photos of shops that have long since disappeared, volunteers in period costume will be collecting recordings of people’s memories and Radio Suffolk will be hosting their lunch time show from the shop on December 8.

**3. Minutes of the previous Meeting** held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010, which had previously been circulated to Councillors, were approved

### **4. Matters Arising**

**4(1) Item 4(1) 8.11.10: Bus stop**

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by Paul Horne of Suffolk County Council on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November to say that the contractors intended to start work on the bus stop on the following Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November. Mr Hull had arranged to move the fence fixing and sawn off the elm stump over the weekend, although the root still remained. It was not clear if this would need to be removed or not, or whether the original price quoted by

Waveney Trees included removal of more than one stump. Mr Hull is to follow up with the tree surgeons. Councillors agreed that if a further amount was payable (in the region of £50) this should be done rather than risk delaying the project further. Due to the bad weather the contractors had not been able to start work when expected and a new date had not yet been scheduled

**4(2) Item 4(2) 8.11.10: Street lights**

The Clerk is still awaiting a meeting date from Suffolk County Council. To chase up again

**4(3) Item 4(4) 8.11.10: Highways matters**

Drainage at The Wash did not seem to have been as bad recently, but there was real concern about the state of the banks on Castle Hill. As the road here is so narrow it is difficult for two large vehicles to pass and the banks are becoming undercut. There is a danger that there will be a landslide if something is not done to remedy the situation. Clerk to contact the County Council and ask for a site meeting. It was also reported that there has been damage to one of the 30mph signs on the B1077 – the right hand side one when entering the village from Eye. Clerk to report this.

**5. Correspondence**

**5(1)** Correspondence for circulation – LAIS Up2Date issues 101030,101105, 101115, 101117; LAIS 1311 *Local Council Precept Data*; follow-up letter from Unison concerning Suffolk County Council's New Strategic Direction; Census 2011 information; *Policing Suffolk* November 2010; letter from Suffolk County Council about Suffolk Trading Standards Consumer Champion Network; copy of report on Mid Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership given to recent SALC meeting by Matthew Spence; *Parish Matters* Autumn 2010 from Came & Company; introductory issue of the *Journal of Local Planning* from Navigus Planning and covering letter; Suffolk Accident Rescue Service *Annual Report 2009-10*; transcript of presentation by Andrea Hill and Question and Answer session from SCC event on NSD at Endeavour House; leaflet about the new on demand bus service (see 2(1) above)

**5(2)** The Newsletter of the Year Competition results had been announced. In the smaller village category the winner was the Stansfield, Denston and Stradishall Village and Church News

**6. Parish Paths Partnership**

There was nothing to report

**7. Planning Matters**

**7(1)** PA3564/10 One and a half storey dwelling with attached single garage, Land South of Beaconsfield Arms, Mill Road, Occold

The plans were tabled and discussed. Mr Hull closed the meeting and asked the applicant, who was present, if he wished to comment. He replied that the new plan is for a dwelling the same size as the original bungalow that had received permission some time ago and is smaller than the recent proposal for which permission was refused. The meeting re-opened and councillors voted in favour of supporting the application

## **8. Meetings and Training**

**8(1)** Mr Hewitson reported on the Mid Suffolk District Council Special Parish Liaison Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November.

The first part of the meeting had been a résumé of the items discussed at an earlier meeting about the proposed merger of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. One outcome of such a merger would be the opportunity for Parish Councils to have more involvement in local government, which could be on one of several levels ranging from simply having an influence on policy decisions to some form of service delivery, perhaps based on clusters of smaller parishes

A scheme involving BT, Virgin and the District Council to upgrade broadband provision in the area would launch in March 2011. Funding had been obtained from the EU

GPs are to be required to operate as consortia in the area – there will be 3 or 4 in the area

The Eye Service Bureau is to close down. The building is owned by the County Council and the District Council only uses it for the local collection of a small amount of rent and Council tax. These will now be payable at the Post Office which is much more cost effective for the District Council anyway. The advice service will be lost but there are plans to provide two freephones at the library with direct access to the relevant departments at the council

The Community Auditor project was explained. It is from a Home Office pilot project aimed at compiling a regional database of local events, etc. The Community Auditor is someone who is prepared to access the system regularly to update it for events in their community. It was felt that most villages had adequate websites providing local information and that this would be duplication

There was a presentation on affordable housing

Temporary Events Notices were discussed

Bus passes will be dealt with by the County Council in future and their use will be more restricted, carers travelling as companions will no longer be covered

The value of taxi vouchers is to be reduced from £104 p.a. to £55 p.a.

Election Day 2011 will be 5<sup>th</sup> May, when there will be Parish, District and National Referendum voting. The referendum on the merger of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will have to be held separately. The Clerk will only be sent one copy of the election papers this time and will be required to provide candidates with their copies

**8(2)** Mr Hubner reported on the Mid Suffolk Locality Roadshow that he attended

I attended one of the MSDC locality roadshows at Stowmarket Community Centre on 18 November.

The roadshow was an informal drop in arrangement, but I was able to spend quite a lot of time speaking with Jonathan Free, the Head of Organisational Development at MSDC.

The purpose of the event was to ask for input from parish councils and other bodies who could be affected by the merger of Mid-Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council.

In setting out the thinking behind the merger (which will happen at administrative but not yet political level), it was no surprise that financial savings would be high on the

agenda.

However, it was clear that the councils are also keen to work towards a political merger and yet continue to involve parish councils (and perhaps involve them more) in decisions which do impact at a local level.

We were asked to indicate those issues which were usually uppermost in the parish council's discussions at regular meetings and I highlighted the following:

- Planning Applications
- Speeding and traffic management issues
- Transport links
- Environmental concerns (such as general waste management)

I indicated that the parish council would not wish to take on board sole responsibility for these matters, but would still want to influence decisions. I do consider that, if a new model of cooperation between parishes is adopted, we may actually want to look at taking a more active role, with appropriate guidance from council officers where required.

The real drive in the roadshow was to see whether parish councils might operate on a different basis, either as a small cluster of councils who would come together at least quarterly and would meet with their appropriate district councillor, and who might also take on such matters as regulating planning within the area, a larger forum of councils who would again meet regularly but would still be a fairly informal gathering and more likely to influence rather than make decisions on most administrative matters, or a formal structure of substantial areas within the region covered by the new merged council which would definitely have decision making powers and would take on board quite a lot of local services.

All of this will come out by way of a consultation, but if you wanted further information Jonathan volunteered that he or one of his colleagues would attend a parish council meeting accordingly.

The other points to note were that it is possible much higher speed broadband services may come our way in the not too distant future. It is noticeable that our parish, pretty much along with most of those in Mid-Suffolk lying to the North of Stowmarket are under resourced in this area.

The second piece of news was that there are going to be financial limitations on, in particular, transport spending and this may well impact upon the bus service, which may become more of a feeder "on demand" service than a regular timetable operation. Of course, this might have an impact upon the usefulness of the proposed new bus stops

**8(3)** A letter had been received from Diss Town Council regarding the proposed meeting to formulate a response to South Norfolk Council Local Development Framework Site Specific Policies document, and asking to let them know of any preference for time of day. It is now proposed to hold the meeting on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January. Councillors varied in their preference – some preferring daytime, others evening – so it was agreed that someone would try to attend whichever was chosen

## **9. Finance**

**9(1)** It was noted that an appeal had been received from Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

This will be considered at the January meeting with the other appeals from 2010

9(2) The Clerk asked for a cheque to be signed for the Poppy Wreath

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

10(1) The Clerk's appraisal was due before the January meeting. Mr Hull and Mr Hewitson to liaise as last year

11. **Date of next meeting** is Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed 9.15pm