

MINUTES

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

Present: Mr K Chittock, Mr R Burnett, Mr B Dyla, Mr J Hewitson, Mr B Hull,
Mr A Miller

Also newly elected County Councillor Andrew Stringer and District Councillor Charles Tilbury (for part of meeting)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Mr Cripps (on holiday), Mr Hubner (family commitments) and Mr Owen (on holiday)

Also from PC Clare Wayman

2. Reports from District Councillor, Community Police Officer

2(1) The Clerk read out the following report from the Community Police Officer: -

There is one crime to report, an outbuilding was broken into by unknown means on Mill Road and blacksmiths equipment was taken.

At this time of year we do normally see a rise in the number of break ins to sheds and outbuildings. These are not always secured well, if at all, but everyone has at least got a lawnmower and a few tools stored inside and being in a rural area, a lot of people have ride on mowers and quad bikes. If you were to sit down and tot up how much the contents of your sheds and outbuildings come to, you might want to think about getting some good quality bolts, padlocks even shed alarms

2(2) The Clerk read out the following report from District Councillor Tilbury: -

Children and Young People: The xChange project is the working title for the My Place Project being set up in Stowmarket at 127 Ipswich Street. This building will be transformed into a world class youth centre including an 8-bed unit for emergency accommodation, an internet cafe and a youth club offering musical events. A number of support agencies, including Connexions and Youth Offending teams, will be contributing to this project.

Affordable housing: The target number of affordable homes for 2008/9 was 120 units, which was comfortably exceeded by the actual outturn of 144. As a result of the credit crunch and downturn in the housing market the target for the current year has been reduced to 75 new homes. Officers are working closely with the Homes and Communities Agency to identify opportunities for additional grant investment for new affordable homes in the District, and trying to work with developers to unlock stalled S106 sites.

Development Control: We have 297 live applications in the system currently. We have been encouraging the use of pre-application advice, and currently have 118 enquiries in the pipeline. While applications have fallen, they are averaging 23 per week compared with 31 previously. In order to match this reduction in demand we have not renewed

two full-time planning posts, and we are running with minimum consultancy support, leading to savings of £57,000 per annum.

Planning Enforcement: Enforcement is under great pressure at present with complaints having risen by around 3 per day on average, while the team has been hit by a spate of illness recently, which has affected progress and meant that special measures are being looked at to cope with current workloads.

Recycling: Thanks to the increasing number of subscribers to the garden waste service, and the additional tonnage from all grass growing in the gardens in the District, the recycling rate is now rising above 41%. If anyone would like to subscribe to the garden waste service please call Brigitte Dawson at the Depot on 01449 778621.

The Suffolk CC Stowmarket Recycling Centre is being turned into a “Super Centre” and we will be asking them to increase some of their recycling lines to deal with plaster board and polythene. If any other waste items cause problems please let me know and I will pass it on. In Stowmarket we are trying out a scheme to recycle some of the market waste via two large bins, and another scheme by placing small recycling bins in the main pedestrian areas of the town that we hope will divert some waste from landfill.

If anyone is interested, Cllr Roy Barker, the Environment portfolio holder, has a number of topless wheeled bins which he has salvaged, and which have many uses e.g. as water butts, feed bins, wood barrows, etc. which are available for £5 each (payable to the Council chairman’s charity).

Community litter picks: During March and April the street cleaning team was very busy working with over 40 parishes in the District on community litter picks, including 11 parishes which held them for the first time.

Councillors’ allowances: At the last Full Council meeting at Needham on May 21 District Councillors voted not to take the increase in allowances (of 2.5%) awarded them by an independent review panel, in recognition of the financial difficulties being faced by many people in the District.

Sponsored bike ride: Lastly, on a personal note, at the end of July I shall be taking part in a 300-mile bike ride from London to Paris in order to raise money for Christian Aid’s projects in Africa. I have never done anything like this before, but after seeing poverty on a scale I had never previously seen in Africa recently, I wanted to do something - however small - to help people like that to help themselves and improve their lives. If anyone would like to sponsor me please go to my just giving page: www.justgiving.com/charlestilbury.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 11th May 2009

Mr Dyla requested that Item 10(3) of the Minutes be amended from

“In the end it was decided to defer a decision until the next meeting, by which time the change of signatory on the account would hopefully be complete and the question of the bus stop may have been resolved anyway”

to read

“In the end it was decided to defer a decision until a response had been received from ORAC regarding the questions about the bus stop. The change of signatory on the account would hopefully be complete by then”

Amendment approved by those present at the meeting and party to that discussion

4. Matters Arising

4(1) Item 5(1) 11.5.09: Bus stop

The Clerk had received an email from ORAC’s secretary explaining that they had been unable to discuss the bus stop questions at their AGM, and apologising for this. The next ORAC meeting was being held on 23rd June and they would discuss this matter then and get back to the Parish Council as soon as possible afterwards

Councillors discussed the draft questionnaire drawn up by the Clerk. Some changes were agreed. The issue of cost was discussed and whether this should be included in the information on the questionnaire. Although the County Council had provided approximate figures it was difficult to calculate the exact cost to the Parish Council as the funding available from the County Council, the Councillor’s Locality Budget, etc was not known exactly. At one time the County Council had offered to fund one of the hard standing areas if the Parish Council paid for the other. It was not known if this offer would still stand. The Road Safety reserves of £1000 would be available to use towards the Parish Council’s share of the cost. It was thought that it should not be necessary to increase the precept to finance the provision of the bus shelter

It was agreed that the questionnaire should be delivered, possibly by Lewis Bloomfield who delivers Oracle for ORAC (at a small cost), to all houses in the village and then Councillors would collect responses in order to maximise the number of replies received. Before distribution the questionnaire was to be sent to ORAC to discuss at their next meeting. Delivery and collection details to be finalised at the meeting of the Parish Council on 6th July

4(2) Item 5(2) 11.5.09: Street lights

The Clerk read out emails from SALC and Nigel Panting at SCC. The latter referred to the inability to prove whether cabling between poles and properties was insulated or not. In relation to her own house the Clerk had received an assurance from Morgan Est (who had carried out the work for EDF in Occold) that it was. She was asked to contact them again and try to find out if all the cables in question had been replaced with insulated cabling

4(3) Item 10(4) 11.5.09: Dog Waste Bin

The Clerk reported that the telegraph pole near the footpath on Mill Road was of too large a diameter to use for mounting the dog waste bin. The alternative would be to provide a bin mounted on its own post in the verge. This would have to be done by the County Council Highways department and Gerald Clarke at SCC had offered to arrange this at no cost to the Parish Council. The Clerk needed to check that the post was compatible with the bin fixings - to contact Glasdon and Mr Clarke regarding this. Assuming that was satisfactory a red Fido 25 bin to be ordered

4(4) Item 9(1) 11.5.09: Village Forum Meeting

It was agreed that Mr Hewitson and Mr Miller would attend the next Village Forum hosted by ORAC to be held in August. Date to be confirmed at next meeting

5. Correspondence

5(1) Correspondence for circulation – Age Concern letter and leaflet on *Promoting Independence*; Parish Council briefing from Mid Suffolk District Council about new procedure for allocating Council and housing association properties; letter and leaflet from SNAP Support and Advice Service on *Housing Related Support in Suffolk*; *Mid Suffolk Arts Events 2009* brochure; Glasdon product information; SALC Minutes of Mid Suffolk Area Meeting held on 10th March 2009; copy of SALC Report to Area Meetings; *Suffolk View Spring 2009*

5(2) Information had been received from Mid Suffolk District Council about Community Achievement Awards 2009. Closing date for nominations is 17th July so Councillors agreed to give consideration to any possible nominees for discussion at the next meeting

5(3) A letter had been received from Suffolk County Council about proposed changes to bus timetables for buses serving Occold. The service would remain largely the same but with some flexibility with regard to setting down times on evening services

6. Parish Paths Partnership

6(1) Mr Hewitson reported that 12 walkers had taken part in his guided walk as part of the Heart of Suffolk Walking Festival in May

6(2) Glyn French at SCC had now been informed that ownership of the land with the lagoon had changed

7. Planning Matters

7(1) It was noted that the following planning applications have been granted permission: -

- i. PA 0604/09 Double Garage at Benningham Grange Barn
- ii. PA0848/09 Agricultural worker's dwelling at Poplar Hall Farm
- iii. PA1065/09 Removal of sycamore tree at 5 Old Rectory Gardens

8. Meetings and Training

8(1) Councillors were informed that the next SALC Mid Suffolk North meeting would be held the next day, on Tuesday 9th June, at Mellis Memorial Hall, 7.00-9.30pm. No-one was prepared to attend. It was commented that at one time a rota was operated so that all Councillors took a turn at attending these and similar meetings

9. Finance

9(1) It was noted that changes of signatory on Alliance Leicester account have now been effected

9(2) To consider request from ORAC that Village Hall fund money be paid towards capital

costs rather than as a donation of equipment (deferred from last meeting) Mr Hull declared a prejudicial interest and left the meeting. It was agreed that there was no objection in principle to paying the donation to the new village hall capital costs rather than by buying equipment for the finished hall

9(3) It was noted that interest of 53p had been received on Alliance Leicester account for month of May 2009

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

10(1) Councillors noted the recent death of Trevor Bloom who had done much work clearing up litter in the village during his life. Clerk to send a sympathy card to his partner, Diane Moore on behalf of the Parish Council

11. Date of next meeting is Monday 6th July 2009 at 8pm in the Village Hall

Meeting dates for the next six months were agreed as follows: -

14th September 2009

12th October 2009

9th November 2009

7th December 2009

11th January 2010

8th February 2010

Meeting closed 9.35pm