

Culford, West Stow and Wordwell Parish Council

MINUTES

of the Meeting held at Culford Village Hall on

Thursday 28th November 2019

Present: Councillors: Joy Childs (Chair), David Fisher, Paul Luke, Myrtle McQueen and Rachel Salt.

In attendance: Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council); There were no members of the public

Cllr Childs opened the meeting and noted that, following his appointment as Clerk but prior to taking up his new appointment, she had received Cllr Clay's resignation.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bruce Murdoch and the reason was approved by the Council.

2. Declarations of Interest

- a. There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda.
- b. There were no declarations of any Other Disclosable Interests.
- c. Cllr Childs informed the meeting that she had a private interest in Item 7a.ii.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2019 were agreed to be a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such on behalf of the Council.

4. District and County Councillor Reports

- a. District Councillor Glossop was present and had submitted a written report which was received by the meeting. The main areas covered were the establishment of an Environment and Climate task force by the District Council; the introduction of electric car charging points in trial locations; work concerning rough sleepers and the strategic housing and economic land availability assessment.
- b. County Councillor Hopfensperger had sent apologies for being unable to attend but had sent a brief report covering Lorry Watch (an organiser will be in touch); a proposed meeting to discuss the road safety issues at Rats corner; and the transfer of parking enforcement from the police to the local authority from the end of January 2020.

5. Public Forum

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

6. Clerk's Report & Administrative Business

- a. There were no decisions taken under delegated powers since the last meeting.
- b. The Clerk reported that:
 - ◆ The handover from the previous Clerk had progressed but some things were still awaited. Although in most respects there was enough to manage with, no electronic files of any description had been received and this hampered progress, especially in relation to correspondence and financial records.
 - ◆ The disconnection of the telephone box in West Stow was a fait accompli and nothing further could be done.

- ◆ The Remembrance Day service in Culford had been well attended and went off well.
- ◆ St Mary's Culford had written to ask for a grant towards a new sound system but this was not being brought forward for consideration as the Parish Council is prohibited from making grants for works to the interior of churches or their furnishings or fittings.

7. Planning

a. The following new applications were considered:

i. DC/19/2158/TE1 (Planning Permission) - Land East of The Street, Culford: *Proposed Mobile Telephone Signal Base Station Installation.*

After brief discussion it was agreed that the siting of the proposed mast was acceptable. Although it would be visible from some angles the benefit was considered to outweigh any minor impact on the rural scene. The Council resolved to support the application.

ii. DC/19/1820/HH (Planning Permission) - Fieldgate Cottage, The Street Culford: (i) *Two storey side and rear extension (ii) vehicular access and driveway (including construction of dropped kerb).*

There was a lengthy consideration of this application which had two distinct elements - proposals for the building itself and a proposal for a drive access and dropped kerb directly on to The Street.

The Council considered the principle of extension to the house, taking into account its position and the size of the plot. It was agreed that there is no reason to resist the proposal in this respect - the plot is of a generous size for the scale of the existing building and there is a significant space between the side of the existing cottage and the boundary to the north. A more than adequate gap would remain if the proposed extension were built.

The cottage is one half of a semi-detached pair in the heart of the village (and therefore at the heart of the conservation area). The site is especially sensitive as it is almost opposite the main gates to Culford Park and close to listed buildings. The cottages are one of several identical pairs constructed by the Culford Estate during the Cadogan period and are characteristic of Cadogan estate buildings, being in mellow red brick with terracotta inset plaques bearing, on one cottage, the date of construction (1890) and on the other the Cadogan cypher. The situation and very specific design of the existing cottage means that particular consideration should be given to the proposed design and the choice of materials.

In terms of precedent, many similar (and indeed identical) cottages on The Street have been extended, although it was noted that this had been achieved with more and less sympathy in different cases.

The Council was of the view that the application seemed to have been carefully and thoughtfully considered and the overall design was to be commended for reflecting the style and form of the existing building while also, by means of a small set-back and a lower roof-line, being distinct from and subservient to it. It was noted that on other sites along The Street earlier 'Benyon' cottages have been added to with more obviously modern pastiches of rural outhouses etc; and it was felt that this treatment would be inappropriate in this case because of the setting as it would tend to break up the harmony of the pair of buildings and their setting. The Council felt that the use of matching brick - as used on an identical cottage further along The Street (Dorch House) had been incorporated to positive effect. The use of weatherboard 'to tie in nicely with Drift Cottage rear extension' was supported at the rear of the building but not on the north side for similar reasons to the above.

It was noted that a large gable end window at high level is proposed for the north elevation. This would form part of the streetscape when approaching from the north and although the gable end style may not have much impact, the window will make more of a statement - it was felt that such a bold addition may jar with the character of the immediate setting and with the character of the cottage itself.

The roofing is specified as being to match the existing materials, using reclaimed tiles if needs be; this was also supported.

The road access and Driveway were felt to be more problematic.

There is a large-sized garden for the size of house and although this would be encroached upon by the proposed extension plenty of parking space for the larger house will remain. However, it was not clear to the Council why additional vehicular access onto The Street is needed as the cottage currently has pedestrian access from the front with good vehicular access to the rear, via The Drift. There are two mature trees on the verge at the proposed point of egress but as they are set well back from the road they would not impede sight lines because vehicles could pull well forward of these obstructions without overhanging the road. Nonetheless, this element of the proposal would create an additional access onto the B road and it was felt that it could be problematic because of its position directly opposite the busy exit to Culford Pre-Prep School at Fieldgate House. It was noted that this is already a difficult exit to negotiate and is especially busy during morning rush hour and between 3 to 6pm. Traffic exiting from the other side of the road would add to the difficulty and to the risk of accidents. Furthermore it seems unnecessary to add an egress onto The Street when a perfectly serviceable point of access is already provided for.

The Council resolved to support the principle of extension and the general design of the western elevation but to object to the proposal overall because of what it feels to be the dangerous additional access to the highway, and the parts of the design of the northern elevation relating to cladding and the large fenestration.

- b. The Clerk reported on progress with the work in front of the gates to Culford Park. In discussion it was agreed that it was unfortunate that permission had been granted without the core details being set.

As the entire purpose of the application was to protect the gates it seemed unsatisfactory that the position of the one element that could actually achieve this (the pair of bollards) had been left out of the decision so that it could not be covered by the consultation process. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Planning Authority to underline the importance of this element and its effective deployment.

- c. Other planning related matters:

- ◆ *Park Cottage* - it was noted that the works had been somewhat clumsy and that did not appear to be finished. There had been confusion about the extent to which the works constituted Permitted Development and the extent to which the cottage's position in the conservation area should be brought to bear. There had been complaints from residents who had been debarred from making alterations on the basis of the Conservation area.

The Clerk will follow up on the matter and report back to a future meeting.

- ◆ The tree outside Toad House had not been replaced. Replacement had been set as a pre-requisite for agreement to fell the original tree which had been the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. The Clerk would follow the matter up with Highways.

8. Relations with Culford School

It was noted with regret that relations with the school had become less constructive and it was agreed that effective and constructive communication and engagement with the School should

be developed and maintained. This would be delegated to the Clerk and it was agreed that he would be the Council's point of contact with the School in future.

9. Speedwatch Scheme

This item was deferred to the next meeting

10. Governance

- a. **Appointment of Internal Auditor** - The Council resolved to appoint Mrs Christine Fitzgerald as Internal Auditor. The Clerk will write to thank the outgoing auditor for his previous work.
- b. **Standing Orders** - The Council considered the draft Standing Orders and resolved to adopt them as drafted.
- c. **Financial Regulations** - The Council considered the draft Financial Regulations and resolved to adopt them as drafted.
- d. **Future Meeting Dates** - The Council resolved to adopt the following dates for meetings for the rest of the administrative year: 23rd January and 26th March 2020; and the date of both the Annual Parish meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Council which will be on 21st May 2020 at 7.30pm and 8pm respectively.

11. Financial Matters

- a. **Banking Arrangements** - It was resolved to add Cllrs Luke and McQueen to the existing signatories and to change the address for the account to the new Clerk's address.
- b. **Financial Records and Financial Statements** - The Council received a report on financial records to the effect that some vouchers and papers had not been passed across to the new Clerk but it approved the Quarter 2 Financial Statements.
- c. **Receipts & Payments** - The Council received the schedule and resolved to approve the payments.

12. Grants

No grants had been made in the current year and it was agreed to review the previous year's grants and decide on any payments for the current year at the next meeting.

13. Budget for 2020/21

The Council noted that the Budget for 2020/21 will be considered at the January meeting and were invited to raise any non-routine items of expenditure for inclusion in the draft by 20th December 2019 in order that the final draft budget can be prepared.

14. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

The Council noted that the transparency rules set out in Localism Act 2011 and brought into effect in 2015 stipulate that all items of business for discussion at a meeting of the Council must appear on the agenda and that this means that new business may not be introduced or discussed under this item.

A number of matters were brought up and noted:

A meeting at Rats Corner had been arranged to discuss road safety. The Clerk and Cllrs Luke and McQueen would attend.

Coping stones which had been taken from the bridge could be fixed as part of the Sel-Help scheme.

There had been fly-tipping on the Timworth lane.

Adverse comments had been received concerning the proliferation of A boards at Park Farm.

The closure of the The Street had resulted in the churning up of the verge and damage to a gateway and gate. It was noted that the resident would need to lodge a complaint with the Highways Authority (County Council).

The flint wall between the old Post Office and the neighbouring houses had partially collapsed. The VAS had been stuck in West Stow for some time and could now be rotated as before.

15. Clerk's Contract

This item was dealt with under Reserved Business but as no confidential aspects were raised it is recorded in the main minutes for ease of reference. The Chair sought the Council's authority to sign the new Clerk's contract of employment on its behalf and it was resolved unanimously to grant that authority. The Chair signed the contract.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date