

Culford, West Stow and Wordwell Parish Council

MINUTES

of the Meeting held electronically via Zoom on

Thursday 28th January 2021

Present: Councillors: Joy Childs (Chair), David Fisher, Paul Luke, Bruce Murdoch, Rachael Salt and Paul Turnill

In attendance: Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Council's first virtual meeting and especially welcomed Cllr Turnill to his first meeting following co-option at the last meeting

20. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Myrtle McQueen.

21. Declarations of Interest

- a. There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda.
- b. There were no declarations of Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda.

22. Minutes

- a. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2020 were agreed to be a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such on behalf of the Council.

23. District and County Councillor Reports

- a. District Councillor Glossop had submitted a written report to the meeting. This was received and discussed briefly and Cllr Glossop added that the illegal kissing gate installed by Culford School continued to provide difficulties for members of the public wishing to use the public right of way.
- b. County Councillor Hopfensperger presented a verbal report and informed the meeting that an enforcement notice had been issued by the County in relation to the illegal obstruction that Culford school had erected across the public footpath but noted that this had been ignored so far.

In relation to concerns about lorries speeding and using narrow lanes, C Cllr Hopfensperger reported that there is to be a review by Highways concerning the impact on villages and particular localities of these problems. The review had been due to start in 2020 but due to Covid-restriction related delays, it is now due to start by the end of March 2021.

In relation to the culverts at Wordwell from Rats Corner northwards that have not been dug out deep enough and which are causing problems, a site visit will be undertaken by Highways, in conjunction with Mr Sutton, who raised the problem in the first place.

It was reported that the problems along the B1106 between Culford and the Fornham St Martin, roundabout had still not been dealt with despite numerous reports to Highways. C Cllr Hopfensperger will chase this up and Cllrs Fisher and Salt will provide her with the latest report numbers to assist in this. Cllr Luke mentioned that the same problems applied to the road at West Stow by the Hall and this will be raised too.

C Cllr Hopfensperger reported that she would be able to make an additional grant of £500 towards the parking at West Stow, from her locality fund.

24. Public Forum

No matters were raised.

25. Clerk's Report & Administrative Business

- a. There were no decisions taken under delegated powers since the last meeting.
- b.
 - i. The Clerk reported that Bank statements were still not being received – he will continue to try to get the bank to respond appropriately.
 - ii. Replacement batteries for the VAS were still proving difficult to obtain due to supply chain problems.
 - iii. The census will be on 21st March and the Government is keen to raise awareness in advance, especially as it is hoped that most people will complete it on line.
 - iv. Grants are still available to support businesses affected by the pandemic restrictions and Members were asked to encourage anyone affected to apply.

26. Planning & Environment

- a. Planning Applications:
 - i. **DC/21/0077/FUL - Culford Lodge Farm, Culford Heath, IP31 1PT** After brief discussion it was agreed that this application to demolish an existing house and replace it would have little impact and there were no objections to it.
- b. **Updates on Previous Applications** - There are amended plans for the Water Tower extension and this is going through the process. The Council was content with the revisions.
- c. **Flooding Arising from the New Glasshouses at Place Farm, Ingham** - It was noted that there are a number of issues concerning the new glasshouse plant in Ingham. The actual build has varied considerably from the submitted and approved plans, including increases to the height of the building at the northern end, the number of silos and the number, type and position of reservoirs.

A resident of Ingham had been in touch with the Clerk to point out that a number of houses have been flooded there since just before Christmas as a result of the position and construction of unapproved reservoirs, some of which have been built above ground level. The problems of flooding have not extended to Culford as yet, other than around the lake in the park, but they could do if the Spring is wet because by and large Culford is down 'hill' and down stream from the glasshouse. Furthermore, it is now known that part of the cause of the excessive light about which several residents have complained is that the construction does not match to the plan. In the light of all this, the Council resolved to add its voice to the objections that the planning authority enforcement team are now receiving from others.

27. Public Rights of Way Problems

It was noted that Culford School had taken no action to remove the obstruction to the Public Right of Way. The Council felt that it was extraordinary that the school was willing to breach the law in this way, even when the breach had been raised with them eight months previously and be the subject of an enforcement order since October 2020. The Clerk was asked to write a letter to the Chair of Governors to draw attention to this, ask for urgent action and ask for an explanation of why the matter had been ignored.

28. Wildlife Friendly Village

Cllr Salt reported that there had been an initial meeting which was attended by about 15 people and that there had been a good level of interest and enthusiasm. Unfortunately the second lockdown had then been implemented and so it has not been possible to take things forward but once the restrictions are lifted a 'kick-off' meeting will be held and there is a plan to use the phone kiosk as a seed library and plant exchange. In the meantime individuals will take things forward on an individual basis. The Council resolved to apply for a £250 grant from D Cllr Glossop's locality grant towards the project.

29. Finance, including the 2021/22 Budget

- a. The Clerk introduced the financial statements for the third quarter of 2020/21 and responded to questions. The Council resolved to receive the statements.
- b. The Council considered the draft budget for 2021/22. After discussion it was resolved to adopt the budget as drafted.
- c. The Council noted that the budget was predicated upon a precept of £9,604 which represented small increase in income but a very small change in the Parish Council element of the Band D Council Tax rate for 2021/22. The Council resolved to approve a Precept of £9,604 for 2021/22 and authorised the Chair and Clerk to sign the instruction to the Taxing Authority (West Suffolk Council).
- d. The schedule of receipts and payments was received and three grants approved at the previous meeting were added to it. The updated schedule was approved by Council.

30. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

Cllr Salt raised the idea of a jigsaw exchange, linked with the Friday Club and suggested buying more jigsaws, and that grant funding could be applied for this. The matter will be brought to the next meeting.

It was noted that the Fish and Chip van is in the village, at the village hall, on alternate Fridays from 4.30 to 6.15pm and that business is brisk.

The *What 4 Words* app for identifying localities was highlighted; it is very useful for identifying the locality of Highways problems and for emergency situations.

Cllr Fisher noted that two of the street lights installed two years ago had not been connected (the old lights are working instead - the Clerk will address this with Highways).

Cllr Salt had noticed that there had been fly-tipping by the telephone exchange and will report it.

Cllr Salt also highlighted a joint initiative between Norfolk and Suffolk aimed at healthy eating. It is called "Let's Eat Savvy".

It was noted that the verges outside house on The Street, Culford, were still being used for parking which was causing damage. Members were asked to report any regular parking on verges to the Clerk but it was noted that where temporary works were being undertaken it seemed reasonable not to take immediate action, notwithstanding that blocking the pavement with a vehicle is illegal. If anyone notices inappropriate, ongoing parking they could let the Clerk know and he will place a polite note on the vehicles windscreen explaining that parking is not allowed on the verges.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.02pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date