

Culford, West Stow and Wordwell Parish Council

MINUTES

of the Meeting held at Culford Village Hall on

Thursday 5th May 2022

Present: Councillors: Rachael Salt (Chair), David Fisher, Paul Luke, and Paul Turnill

In attendance: Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council)
Five members of the public.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies as all councillors were present.

2. 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.

3. Minutes

- a. Following a discussion about the record of the discussion about grant-giving (Item 51), the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2022 were unanimously agreed to be a true record and the Chair of the meeting was authorised to sign them as such on behalf of the Council.

4. Public Forum

A member of the public asked how to find out about Council finances and in particular the budget for grants. For general financial information the website is a good source of information; the grants budget for the current year is £1,200 (the previous year had been £2,200 because no grants had been made in the year before that).

A member of the public spoke to ask about funding for Jubilee events. This was referred to Item 7, (below) and it was also noted that the Council had already made a decision in principle to fund community events related to the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and that community groups could also apply to the District Councillor for locality funds.

A member of the public raised the issue of speeding on the main road through Wordwell and North Stow which has resulted in a series of accidents several of them resulting in serious injuries. He felt that through traffic should be directed towards A roads. He also raised the issue of the poor state of the roads as well as the poor quality of repairs and the way that repairs are organised, both of which were very wasteful.

A further member of the public raised the problems of Rats Corner that had been discussed at the previous meeting; he was particularly concerned that the approach of the County Council was that action will be taken only in response to accidents that cause serious injury. It was pointed out that the County Council argue that their approach is evidence based but that this seemed an inadequate approach if action to reduce known dangers was only taken after fatal or life-changing accidents had taken place.

A question about the timing of the issue of minutes was raised. The Clerk pointed out that illness with Covid had caused a delay on this occasion.

Another member of the public raised the issue of the large number of lorries using the small unclassified road leading to West Stow, off the Bury road, rather than the designated lorry route, via Rats Corner. It was noted that the Council had raised this issue as part of the Lorry Route review, the result of which was awaited, but it was hoped that this would introduce both better routes and better signage and enforcement.

Finally, the Council was asked whether a SpeedWatch scheme had ever been considered. The response was that the Council had tried to get such a scheme going in the period before Covid but

that no volunteers had come forward. The Chair added that if there was an appetite for a scheme, the Council had expressed willingness to help establish it. A minimum of eight people are required to set up a scheme.

5. Clerk's Report & Administrative Business

- a. There were no decisions taken under delegated powers since the last meeting.
- b. The Clerk reported that the year end financial and governance processes were underway. The draft dates of meetings for the administrative year were put forward for Councillors to review prior to their formal adoption at the Annual Meeting, later in the month.

The District Council is keen to ensure that everyone knows what is happening about the £150 rebate for household in Council Tax bands A to D. This had already been made to residents who pay council tax by direct debit. Other eligible households will receive payments but it will take longer. Anyone who is eligible but does not receive a rebate is encouraged to contact West Suffolk Council.

The new bank mandate had been delayed by administrative reasons but should now be progressing.

The District Council had written to ask about hens loose in the forest at North Stow as it had become an enforcement issue. The probable owner was identified and this will be passed on.

Finally, the Clerk reminded the Council that candidates were required for co-option. The Chair suggested a leaflet drop and using the WhatsApp groups was also suggested. It was noted that the parish magazine was only received by subscribers so was not a way to get to all residents. Details of how to express an interest are on the web site. It was agreed to use the WhatsApp groups and the Notice Boards.

6. Planning & Environment

a. Planning Application Consultations:

- i **DC/22/0699/TCA - Southwood, The Street, Culford:** Trees in a conservation area notification - three Poplar (T1, T2 and T3 on plan) - fell. It was resolved to raise no objections.

There were two applications received after the agenda was circulated:

- ii **DC/22/0737/TCA - Barfleet, The Street, Culford:** Trees in a conservation area notification - 3 Leyland cypress, 1 Thuja and 1 Sycamore - fell. 1 Leyland Cypress - remove two low limbs growing over summer house. Cllr Turnill declared a private interest, as an immediate neighbour, and did not participate in the discussion. It was resolved to raise no objections.
- iii **DC/22/0764/TCA - Edgewood, 13 Chimney Mills, West Stow:** Fell two Cypress. It was resolved to raise no objections.

7. Queen's Platinum Jubilee

No firm plans had been made prior to former Cllr Murdoch's withdrawal. It was noted that a Beacon would be lit in the grounds of the School, organised by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and all members of the public were invited to attend this short event (9.30 to 10pm on Thursday 2nd June)

The Culford Club will be open that evening so that anyone attending the Beacon lighting could repair there afterwards.

West Stow Church is planning an event on the Sunday of the Jubilee weekend. This will include a barbeque, children's activities such as face painting, crown making, Jenga, a scavenger hunt and similar games. the whole civil parish of Culford, West Stow and Wordwell will be welcome. The group was also keen to explore the idea of a commemorative item such as a mug and sought funding for that and to support the costs of material for activities. The Council resolved to make a grant of £750.

8. Grant Making Policy

A draft policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In discussion the issue of giving to organisations based outside the village but which benefit residents was raised and it was noted that such organisations could be asked to make an application. It was agreed that focusing funding on specific projects rather than routine operating costs would be a positive step forward.

It was also noted that inaccurate comments had been circulating that the Council had withdrawn monies from some organisations and it was agreed that the new policy would eliminate any confusion and would be more inclusive. The Council resolved to adopt the policy and to communicate the decision via the website and the WhatsApp group.

9. Jigsaw Puzzle Library

a. The Jigsaw library has been a great success and had originally been set up as a result of the late Cllr Childs and Cllr Salt swapping jigsaws. They had realised that would be a wider demand and that such a service could help to be a positive outreach tool and could alleviate social isolation. Cllr Salt proposed that the Council should honour the late Cllr Childs by naming the Library after her. The Council supported the proposal unanimously and resolved so to do.

b. Flempton-cum-Hengrave had asked whether they could join in the Library and the Council resolved to agree to this.

10. Culford Park - Flood Lighting and Sports Pitch Cover (Igloo)

It was reported that the School had been out to investigate the situation and appeared to be taking the situation seriously; the 'Igloo' had been deflated this year.

11. Mobile Phone Coverage

It was noted that coverage in the village remains poor and patchy and that the applications for a mast had been either withdrawn or rejected, despite the fact the Parish Council had supported them. Individuals can contact OfCom to register the poor signal and can also contact their own providers who may then put pressure on the infrastructure provider to address the problem. It was resolved that the Council would also write to the infrastructure provider asking them to push forward their plans for a mast.

12. Finance

It was noted that the Precept had been received.

13. Welcome Pack

It was resolved to adopt the pack as now drafted and to add further photographs as they become available.

14. Rats Corner Junction

It was noted that in previous discussions, and in meetings with the Highways department, it had been established that a roundabout was unlikely to be a realistic possibility and would cost a very considerable amount of money. For illustration, it was reported that simply changing a speed limit costs several thousand pounds. The Highways department had previously said that they would undertake a speed survey but this had not happened.

The possibility of altering the priorities at the junction was discussed and it was agreed that this was the most positive possibility and could be supported by the history of accidents. A member of the public who had direct knowledge of some of the incidents that had occurred will set out the history in an email to the Clerk and it was resolved that the Council would then write to County Cllr Hopfensperger to follow up on the speed survey and to press for further action.

15. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

Cllr Luke reported that a resident had offered to carry out the repair on the West Stow sign.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.32pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date