

TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON WEDNESDAY 15th NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Cllrs R Perks (Chairman), J Kearsley, D Blundell, Mrs P Fletcher, Cllr S Mansel, Cllr Levantis
Cllr J Storey together with 5 villagers

1. Apologies: Mrs M Bottomley (Clerk), Mr. B. Alexander

2. Councillors declarations of interest

Cllr R Perks regarding the Village Hall Report and Art Show/Open Gardens

3. Dispensations None.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 4th October 2017

These had not been produced due to the illness of the Clerk.

5. Reports

5.1 District Council Report

Cllr Levantis advised that Mid Suffolk staff have now moved to Endeavour House. Facilities are fine but were issues concerning public access. A high level of staff turnover had taken place in the planning department which could impact on the local planning process.

Cllr S Mansel reported that a replacement for the corporate planning manager had been recruited who would be joining the Council shortly. The local access office in Stowmarket was operational although there may be IT problems.

New wards have been drawn up for our area, subject to consultation. Tostock is combined with Thurston, Stowlangtoft and Beyton with two district councillors. Elmswell will be combined with Woolpit to form another ward with two councillors. The deadline for public responses on these proposals is 11th December 2017. The final decision on these proposals is made by the Boundary Commission.

Public Consultation on the merger of Mid-Suffolk and Babergh Councils has been agreed although it is not subject to scrutiny by Mid-Suffolk councillors.

Major new housing developments have been approved at Thurston (869 properties) and Elmswell (106 properties) with a further 250 to be considered in the near future.

5.2 County Councillor Report – Mrs J Story

Suffolk Local Access Forum has questioned some of the level crossing proposals from Network Rail.

West Meadows traveller site in Ipswich is being proposed for sale. SCC has agreed to negotiate with current residents to purchase their pitches retaining a ransom strip to safeguard the site.

The Adult Safeguarding Board has reported on proposals for housing and population growth which have implications for education provision for Elmswell and Woolpit.

Winter gritting has commenced with temperatures falling to 1 degree centigrade. A and B roads are gritted first, followed by school routes. A map of these is on Suffolk County website. The Highways Agency grits the A14.

Suffolk Highways has undergone a re-organisation and a reporting link is on the website which also shows if anything has already been reported <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue/>. Villagers with concerns about potholes, road damage, or flooding risks due to blocked drainage ditches, or obstructions etc. should use this facility.

Scrutiny Committee on 23rd November will include budget savings for 2018/19. Given budget pressures it may be that the SCC element of the Council Tax will need to rise by 1.99%.

5.3 Village Hall Report

This was accepted.

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6. Public participation

Concern was expressed at the absence of minutes of the previous meeting. It was explained that this was due to the Clerk's illness.

A question was raised as to the possibility of summarising and reducing the amount of space taken up on Parish Council issues and that this was putting people off reading the Chronicle. It was explained that this was a matter for the Editor of the Chronicle and that for detailed information people could be directed to the website.

Concerns were raised about Norton Road ditches being overgrown and full of debris increasing the risk of flooding which presents an additional hazard in cold or wet weather.

The issue speeding along Norton Road was raised and it was suggested that flashing speed warnings may reduce this. This was discussed at the last meeting and would require volunteers from around the village to move the signs around. It was also asked if the litter picking arrangements included the Village Hall.

7. Finance

7.1 There is currently a balance of approximately £7,000 on the Council's current account and approximately £29,000 in balances. After budgeted spending commitments this would fall to approximately £13,600 which is approximately twice the annual precept.

7.2 The audit report recommendations need to be kept on the agenda in order that the Parish Council can sustain progress on the items highlighted including an annual financial risk assessment.

7.3 The locality funding available for appropriate projects is still available.

7.4 Village Hall Grant Request for First Aid training and First Aid Kit. This funding, in the sum of £190, was approved to come from reserves, proposed S Mansel and seconded P Fletcher.

7.5 Tostock Football Pitch. The Council supported the suggestion that an application for Section 106 funding available to the Parish Council be applied for seeding, rolling and treatment of infestation of both pitches on the playing fields. Proposed S Mansel seconded P Fletcher.

7.6 The Parish Clerk is requested to establish whether the Council has been invoiced for the annual play area inspection.

7.7 Village Hall Oil Cloths and curtain rails. The Council approved the use of the underspending on new tables and chairs to purchase new oil cloths to prolong their lives and also curtain railing. Proposed S Mansel agreed Mrs P Fletcher.

7.8 Request for Publicity Funding for the Art Show/Open Gardens This would cover the cost of posters and banners. It was agreed that the applicants be invited to attend the next Parish meeting to present their ideas and costings taking any account of any resources they had to contribute.

8. Precept Arrangements

A Resource Committee meeting will be scheduled to develop budget proposals. Interim clerical support may be necessary in the event that Mrs Bottomley is unable to return to work due to ill health in time to prepare the figures.

9. Planning

The surface water concerns on Norton Road raised by the Parish Council will be followed up by district councillors as no reply has been received.

10. Village Matters**10.1 The Leys and Green Tracks**

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Councillor Perks will contact the contractors to establish the start date for this work.

10.2 Gateway Signage

The Parish Council proposals have received an encouraging response from the new highways engineer. SCC has an agreement with a gateway supplier which will be followed up.

10.3 The Telephone Box

A further meeting with the contractor should enable an order to be placed to have it painted (£1,300 funding from reserves).

10.4 The Fireworks Event

This was very successful and contributed to a buffer fund to cover any losses from bad weather in future years.

11. Tree Warden

P Fletcher volunteered to find out what is required of a tree warden in order that she may act in this capacity on behalf of the Council.

12. Items for the Chronicle

A reminder of the reporting arrangements for highways related issues.

13. Correspondence None

14. Date of Next Meeting – 13th December 2017.

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