

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH MARCH 2009, IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7:15 PM

Present: David Long (Chairman), David Pryke (Vice-Chairman)
Ian Angus, Pat Pryke, Linda Sharp,
Jean Ruthen (Parish Clerk)

Patricia O'Brien (County Councillor)
Veronica Falconer (District Councillor)
PC Mike Crisp

Members of Public: Marian Rose, Barrie Hawtin

The meeting opened at 7:20pm.

VILLAGE FORUM (Parish Council Agenda Items Only)

There were no questions.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Patricia O'Brien attended the meeting and the main points of her report were as follows:

- Boundary Committee decision has now been delayed. The consultation will run from March 19th until May 14th. The Boundary Committee will then consider and make recommendations to the Secretary of State on July 15th. The decision by the Secretary of State is likely to be in September
- Local County Council elections will take place in Suffolk on June 4th, along with the European elections.
- Suffolk County Council organised a Suffolk Summit with all the district and borough councils to reflect the credit crunch and to put forward measures to help those most in need.
- Mrs O'Brien presented two important reports to cabinet on February 5th. One relating to the proposals for changes to 59 schools in the School Organisation Review, reminding people of the reasons for changing the structure of schools from 3 to 2 tier and detailing the proposals. The second report dealt with the results of the consultation into Special Education needs provision. It is proposed that Special Schools be co-located on mainstream school sites.
- £3.8m is being put into vulnerable children. The number of 'looked after children' has gone up in Suffolk. This considerable amount of money has been able to be put into the service because of the £12m savings the County Council has made this year.
- £3m is to be put into transport schemes across Suffolk. Projects that will interest Martlesham Division are those in Ipswich and Felixstowe.
- Funding is also going to be available for local transport schemes in each of the districts and boroughs. Suffolk Coastal's allocation is 200k. This initiative has only just come into being and at the locality meeting of Suffolk Coastal County Councillors on 27th February, it was agreed that funding for this year would be divided between the councillors and each would receive £12,000 to be spent by April. Councillors can choose from local schemes that have been drawn up by SCC.
- The increase in Council Tax for 2009/10 is to be 2.45%
- Nacton Primary School – Changes to Secondary School arrangements

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Veronica Falconer attended the meeting and the main points of her report were as follows:

There have been several briefing and training sessions such as:

- Concessionary Travel
- Presentation on NHS Foundation Trust where they want ordinary people to become members in their effort to become more business like and at new ways of achieving excellence.
- The Police invited several people from different fields to attend an excellent play performed by pupils from Deben High School on tackling Antisocial Behaviour.
- Haven Gateway Partnership – The workings of the Partnership were explained by the Chief Executive, David Ralph. Their emphasis appears to be on maintaining 'quality of life', implementing their IDP,

Integrated Development Plan, and investing in communities. It sees itself as a facilitator bringing together groups of individuals from both the public and private sectors to work on specific practical projects and a high quality environment and they want to meet the challenge of sustainable growth. They do not seem to have any say in improvement plans for the Orwell Bridge, gas supplies and secondary schools, but their emphasis is to be on learning skills, university education and employment etc.

- LDF - Levington wrote an excellent letter showing that immense time and thought had been given to these complex documents which will shape our future and everyone has much to be grateful for all their efforts in contributing.
- Boundary Committee – There will be an update at a Parish Liaison Meeting to be held on 30th March at Kesgrave Conference Centre.
- Council Tax – Despite falls in income Suffolk Coastal have set the increase to 2.9%.
- SCDC Staff – Paul Coffey is now Lead on behalf of the Council to liaise and negotiate with all consultees, the applicant and agent re. the BT Application.

POLICE REPORT

PC Mike Crisp attended the meeting and he reported that there had been two thefts in the parish since the last meeting. An outboard motor and a VHF radio had both been stolen from boats at the Marina. PC Crisp had now returned to full duties and aimed to patrol the Marina area more frequently.

PC Crisp also reported on the accident on the Old A45 on Sunday 1st March. A motorcyclist came off his bike and the road was closed for almost 2 hours while the extent of his injuries were ascertained

The Parish Council updated PC Crisp on the recent meeting they had held with the police in charge of Operation Stack.

The Parish Council meeting opened at 8.05pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Jane Timmins and Mike Barker.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (REMINDER OF CODE)

There were no declarations of interest

3. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 7TH JANUARY 2009 ALSO MINUTES OF ADDITIONAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2009

The two sets of minutes were agreed by the Parish Council and signed as a true copy for each meeting

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES

(Not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

Suffolk Wildlife Trust : A provisional date for the escorted estuary walk, which would be for a maximum of 20 people, had been agreed with Mick Wright for 10am on 28th March 09. It was agreed to put an announcement of the walk in the newsletter.

5. FINANCE REPORT

Payments made

3.2.09 Pat Pryke – photocopying January newsletter £54.00

Payments

SALC – ‘Quality Seminar’ Lunch – Marian Rose £ 5.75

SCC – Chair for Village Hall £ 29.21

Clerk’s Salary and expenses

44 hrs @ £8.071 £355.12

1st Class Large Stamps £ 2.08

6 1st Class Stamps £ 2.16

Box of A4 copier paper (inc VAT) £12.41

Cartridge £ 9.99

£26.64

£381.76

All payments were agreed by the Parish Council.

6. (a) **PLANNING**

C08/2034 – Suffolk Yacht Harbour, Stratton Hall, IP10 0LN – Erection of security station – Supported by Parish Council. Permission granted by SCDC 28.1.09.

C08/2127 – 1 & 2 Stratton Hall Cottages, Stratton Hall Drift – Erection of replacement dwelling.

Opposed by Planning Committee. Considered by SCDC's South Sub-Committee on 5.2.09.

Permission granted. The Chairman thanked D. Pryke for attending the meeting on behalf of the Parish Council.

C08/1975 – Pinetree Cottages, Bridge Road, Levington IP10 0NA – Erection of rear conservatory.

Supported by Planning Committee. Permission granted by SCDC 4.2.09

C09/0097 – Land adjoining workshop, Walk Farm, Stratton Hall. Supported by Planning Committee, 10.2.09.

C09/0065 – 1 New Cottages, Nacton Road, Levington, IP10 0LE. Part demolition of existing side extension and rebuild reducing width. Supported by Planning Committee, 20.2.09.

C09/0131 – 1 Lower Farm Cottages, Nacton Road, Levington IP10 0EL Insertion of Catslide Dormer Window to form en-suite bathroom. (Resubmission). Supported by Planning Committee 20.2.09.

6. (b) **Planning application C00/1494 – dated 13.11.2000.** Erection of Barn for Agricultural Purposes.

A letter had been received from a resident regarding a possible infringement of this planning application and it had been referred to the Compliance Officer at Suffolk Coastal District Council.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) 15.1.09 - Filming Enquiry – Children's BBC – Email from Viv Hotten at SCDC – noted by the Parish Council

(ii) 16.1.09 – Email from Jo Mael SCDC - 4 day IOSH Managing Safety Course - noted

(iii) 3.2.09 – The Rural Services Network – This is a grouping of rural service organisations, established to both argue the case on behalf of rural services and financial provision to them and also to network and seek to establish and promote best practice. SCDC is a member of SPARSE. They are happy for Council to be members of the Community Group of the Network free of charge. They will be seeking to recruit Local Councils in 'non-membership' areas on that basis. They will list the Parish Council as a Community member of the Network unless it lets them know to the contrary. Noted.

(iv) 3.2.09 – Weekly Rural News Digest. Noted.

(v) Invitation to a 'Life of Lorry Driver Event' to be held by the SCC on 19th February at Endeavour House. Attended by David Long.

(vi) Email from Gwen Gibbs, SCDC – Standards Committee Meeting – Thursday 5th March, Council Chambers. Noted.

8. **LOCAL REORGANISATION IN SUFFOLK**

Boundary Committee decision on 13th February has now been postponed until 15th July 2009.

Accordingly, the Town and Parish Liaison Meetings arranged by SCDC for 23rd February 2009 were cancelled.

The current revised LGR timetable is as follows:

- Boundary Committee for England (BCE) to publish any further draft proposals for the structure of Local Government in Suffolk; Norfolk and Devon on 19th March 2009
- BCE to receive representations on these draft proposals until 14th May 2009
- Final recommendations from the BCE to the Secretary of State by 15th July 2009

Two Parish Liaison meetings have been organised for the 30th March 2009 to provide Town and Parish Councils with a detailed picture of whatever proposals are announced by the BCE on 19th March. David Long and Ian Angus will attend.

As the LGR is going into a second consultation period, the Parish Council may decide to hold an extra Council Meeting, but will assess the situation when the proposals are known.

9. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

Consultation Documents on Suffolk Coastal Local Development Framework were received on 5th December 2008.

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (Preferred Options)

Site Specific Allocations & Policies (Issues and Options)

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (Sustainability Appraisal)
Documents were considered by working group comprising D. Long, D. Pryke and I. Angus. An additional Parish Council Meeting was held on 3rd February to agree the response to be returned by 20th February. This was considered, agreed and letter sent to SCDC dated 12th February 2009. This letter will be attached to the Minutes on file.

Copy of letters to SCDC regarding Core Strategy and Development Control Policies and Site Specific Allocations received from Patricia O'Brien and Suffolk Preservation Society were noted.

D. Long, D. Pryke and I. Angus visited the Consultant's presentation sessions in Trimley and Walton on options for developments in Felixstowe/Walton/ and the Trimleys.

10(a) SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS

The next meeting will take place this month on the 20th in Bucklesham Village Hall which will be a Community Meeting. It was suggested it would be helpful to get a mention of this in the newsletter, noting that any suggestions or comments received would not be raised until the following meeting.

The following meeting will be held in the middle of the year in Nacton, then a Community Forum on 21st September in Levington Village Hall and a Tasking Meeting on 28th September also in the Village Hall.

10(b) OPERATION STACK

A report of a briefing meeting held on Friday 27th February 2009, attended by Chief Inspector Mike Bacon, Inspector Alex Morrison and Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Councillors David Long, Ian Angus and David and Pat Pryke was tabled, and this will be attached to the minutes on file. The main points were as follows:

1. Emergency Vehicles/Village and School Buses

- Operation Stack involves and relies on the co-ordinated actions of several agencies. Since the Police assume overall control, Chief Inspector M. Bacon and Inspector A. Morrison agreed that all problems should be directed to them and undertook to ensure that all issues were passed on to other relevant agencies.
- General access to and from the old A45 is prohibited during Operation Stack. However it is essential that emergency vehicles and the local 163 buses (including school buses) are able to use this route. On recent occasions, cones placed right across the road both sides of Levington Bridge have obstructed both and on one occasion, the lorries were parked on the old A45 so as to completely block access to the bridge.
- **Police Action:**
 - (a) Stack police and the Highways Agency Staff should be briefed not to place cones right across the road at either end of the Railway Bridge, but to leave a gap wide enough so that emergency vehicles could drive straight through without being further delayed to a 999 call by having to get in and out of an ambulance or fire engine to remove and then replace the cones.
 - (b) Stack police to be reminded that a gap in the line of parked lorries must be left adjacent to the bridge.
- Noted : Police confirmation that emergency vehicles would be allowed through Stack and not accompanied by police escort vehicle i.e. without delay.

2. Signage

The timely and correct placement of the 'Road Closure' signage is vital as it is the only reliable means by which villagers and local road users are made aware that Operation Stack is on.

The Chairman had written to Guy McGregor, County Councillor, SCC, pointing out that it was the first anniversary of the temporary 2 year arrangements for Operation Stack, requesting an update on various points and enclosing a copy of the above-mentioned report.

11. VILLAGE OF THE YEAR

(A) The Parish Council held a briefing meeting to give consideration to the use of the Village of the Year prize money. Villagers had also been asked for suggestions and these had been incorporated into the projects programme compiled as follows:

Prize Funded (£10,200)

1. Extension to Village Hall
2. Improved lighting in the Village Hall

3. Better lighting outside the Village Hall
4. Bench outside Village Hall
5. Re-design the Village Hall notice board

This first group offers potential provision of an extension for storage to the Village Hall. It was agreed with the Village Hall Trustees to form a joint working group to take discussions and planning forward. With regard to the lighting outside the Village Hall, the Flower Show had agreed to match the cost of £1000 with the Parish Council, on a 50/50 basis, and also contribute £200 towards the bench outside.

Environment Prize funded (£500)

6. Bird-boxes in Tricker's Wood and Churchyard. The Council felt this was worth pursuing. Perhaps to place 10 bird-boxes between Tricker's Wood and the Churchyard. Consideration would be given to trying to get together some children from the village to help build them, in time for the nesting season next year.
7. Put a bench/seat on the river bank overlooking the river. It was felt that this item was worth further consideration and discussion with interested parties, especially the landowner.
8. Hedge planted along the north side of Tricker's Wood. It was agreed to refer Item 8 to the Church Field Working Group.

SCDC Reward

9. Supplementary notices on the Levington Village road signs – SCDC is taking this up with SCC on behalf of the Parish Council..

Projects funded from Revenue, Locality Budget (£300) and Reserves

10. Provide chairs with arms for the Village Hall - It is hoped to purchase 4 or 5 chairs at £40.00 each. The Flower Show and the Coffee Club have offered to fund a chair. The Luncheon Club will take it up with their committee and the WI will go through a formal process. The History Club may also fund a chair.
11. Repaint letters and clean War Memorial. The cost is approximately £850 and is not fully funded at the moment due to lack of confirmation of 09/10 Locality Budget. It may require a possible contribution from the Parish Council.
The Locality Budget gave £150 towards this last year and it was agreed that the Locality Budget for this year, if confirmed at £300, would be spent on this project.
12. Dishwasher in Village Hall Kitchen (£2500). After discussion, it was agreed the Parish Council would work in partnership with the Luncheon Club. The Parish Council would fund up to £500, the cost of installation, and order the machine.
13. Put up notices/barrier to stop horse riders and cyclists from using the river path. This item should be given more thought. Meeting required with Anne Robinson of SCC, Stephen Rackham and Parish Councillors.
14. Digital projector and laptop for the Village Hall. (£1000). A 50/50 split between the Council and monies already received from slide shows.
15. Car Park outside Almshouses. A verbal estimate of £3000 had been received from SCC last year. This to be pursued and a written estimate sought from SCC.
16. A second bus shelter on the Old A45. Pat Pryke had prepared a submission to the SCC and the Council agreed that this should be submitted.

The following suggestions had not yet been discussed in detail and did not form a priority, so were not funded.

17. Village day on Village Field during summer
18. Use the Village Field for village events
19. CCTV system to catch miscreants

A copy of the Projects Programme will be attached to the minutes on file. This indicates local committees who would take each project forward. Additional external funding would be sought as identified in the Projects Programme.

- (B) Pat Pryke gave a general update of the Village of the Year England Competition including the following items:
 - (i) Winning Metal Plaques – It is hoped to fix the winning plaques to the Levington sign near the cannon in the very near future.

- (ii) The Levington Video Recording - !00 copies of the DVD were produced and more could be produced if required. The DVD had had excellent feedback and had been much appreciated. Mrs. Pryke thanked the small team who produced it.
- (iii) Possible Film Documentary - A film production company is putting together documentaries and have approached Calor's PR company for general information about the Village of the Year competition and the successful villages involved, but it may come to nothing.
- (iv) Pat Pryke requested that the Council progress the Levington ENGLAND Village of the Year banner as soon as possible.

12. ANGLIA IN BLOOM

Working party comprising Councillors D. Long, P. Pryke and Linda Sharp plus Caroline and Barry Young from the Flower Show Committee, Diane Willstead, WI, Diana Hawtin, PCC and Bob Hardwick, local expert, would be meeting for the first time next Tuesday. The team will keep the Parish Council informed of progress.

13. ANGLIAN WATER – LEVINGTON SEWERS

Letter of complaint was sent to Anglian Water from the Parish Council, regarding serious sewage problems in one of the cottages on Gun Hill. Anglian Water attended and the problem was dealt with very promptly.

There has now been an underground CCTV survey of the length of sewer from the chamber at 4 Gun Hill Cottages to the Anglia Water sewerage works, which showed that the pipe had 'fatted-up'. This has been jet washed, and is now clear. It also showed that the fall in the sewerage pipe flattens along this run, which probably contributed to the build up of waste.

The manager of the sewerage works has now budgeted for a 6 monthly monitor and clear.

14. ELECTION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNOR - NACTON SCHOOL

Ian Angus' current term of Community Governor at Nacton School, representing Levington and Stratton Hall, comes to an end in March. Ian Angus had indicated he would be willing to continue and the Chairman has responded to the Headteacher supporting his re-election for a further 4 years.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Angus for contributing his time and experience over the past 4 years.

15. PARISH CLERK

It was formally agreed that Marian Rose would take over from Jean Ruthen, as Parish Clerk, at the end of this year.

The Parish Council thanked Jean for giving adequate notice and carrying out the transition arrangements over the rest of the year.

16. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

- (a) **Tree and Church Field** - Nothing to report.
- (b) **SALC Meeting** to be held on Monday evening, 9th March 2009 would be attended by Pat Pryke, David Long and Ian Angus.
- (c) **Village Hall** - Nothing to report.
- (d) **Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses** - The Chairman reported that he and Bob Hardwick had planted some hedging plants in the gap in the Almshouses hedge. He thanked Bob Hardwick for his help.
Ian Angus reported that they had now held their Quinquennial survey.
Following a report that some of the lighting approaching the Almshouses did not work, Ian Angus investigated and the lighting appeared to be working.
- (e) **Local Transport** – Pat Pryke reported as follows:
 - She has finalised a submission to the SCC for a second bus shelter on the westbound side of the Old A45 and this was agreed by the Parish Council.
 - We have received the first edition of a new Parish Representatives' newsletter.
 - Operation Stack and Local Bus Services using the Old A45 – These matters were taken up with the Police at the last debriefing meeting.
- (f) **Coast & Heaths/Footpaths** – No report.

- (g) **Emergency Planning**
Linda Sharp had been in contact with Mike Topliss, Emergency Planning Officer, SCDC, regarding the Emergency Plan. It was agreed to invite Mike Topliss to come along and speak to the Council, to look at the Emergency Plan and give his advice. When the plan is complete it would be brought back to the Parish Council for agreement.
- (h) **I. Angus reported on the changes to Secondary School Catchment Area.** He raised the problem that had resulted from Year 6 Levington children NOT being granted a secondary school place at Kesgrave High School, which is the official catchment school for Levington (although, bizarrely, not for Stratton Hall). Instead they had been told they will have to go to Holywells School on Nacton Road, Ipswich.

Mr Angus pointed out that many of the parents had chosen to live in Levington because they wanted to ensure that their children would go to Kesgrave School. While the county can no longer guarantee a place at the catchment school (a change in the national code on admissions), they gave no warning to the parents or Nacton School that there was a problem.

It was pointed out that, over time, this would have the effect of fewer parents with school-going families wanting to live in the parish, with the result that the village would lose the associated vitality. The government wants us to believe that every child matters: it was pointed out that our parents didn't feel that this is the way to treat parents, who are making a conscious effort to give their children the best start in life. It appeared that there was nothing that the families could do other than 'appeal' against the decision.

VILLAGE FORUM

- No. 13 on the Prize Money Projects List, which had been handed out, referred to putting up notices/barrier to stop horse-riders and cyclists from using the river path. A resident commented that the last time one was erected, somebody ripped down the barrier and it was thrown in the creek. The SCC, Rights of Way, would not allow it to be put back.

The Chairman stated that before any decision would be made regarding this project, the Parish Council would get advice from Annette Robinson, the Suffolk County Council Rights of Way Officer.

- Mr. B. Hawtin asked what the current position was with the renovation of the war memorial. The Chairman advised that the second estimate had now been received, but the project was not fully funded yet as notice of the 09/10 Locality Budget was awaited. Mr. Hawtin hoped that the timescale could be arranged to bring together the installation of the new seat nearby and the finished memorial.

The Council had agreed to progress this work and would probably accept the lower quotation from the stonemasons, F. Masters of Woodbridge.

- Marian Rose referred to the suggestion listed in the Prize Money Projects Programme, for improved lighting in the Village Hall, and asked what the proposal would be. The Chairman advised that this would be considered jointly by the Village Hall Trustees and the Parish Council.
- Marian Rose advised that she had attended a Suffolk Association of Local Council's seminar on Quality Status and would be willing to help the Parish Council achieve this status when in the role of Parish Clerk. She had also spoken to Kerry Burn of One Suffolk regarding our website, which was not up to date. The Chairman explained that this was due to computer problems and expected to be corrected shortly.
- Mr. Hawtin asked for clarification on the siting of the bird boxes. It was explained that a cursory tour of the churchyard and Tricker's Wood had been undertaken to gain some information on the number and type of boxes. This would be shared with Church Representatives before more detailed work was undertaken.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm