

Minutes of the Shotley Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 19th January 2017 at 7:15pm at the Shotley Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs B Powell (Chairman), B Higgs (Vice-chairman), J Catling, R Green, N Green, M Williams, District Cllr D Davis, District Cllr P Patrick, Mrs D Bedwell (Parish Clerk) and eight members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received (and approved) from Cllrs P Merrin and B Nichols. Apologies had also been received from County Cllr D Woods.
2. **Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda and additions to register:** A dispensation for the purpose of precept setting had been requested by all councillors and this was approved.
3. **Reports**
 - (i) District Councillor's report: A verbal report was received from District Cllrs D Davis and P Patrick.
 - (ii) County Councillor's report: No report available but apologies received.
4. **Suspension of standing orders:** *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak:* **Meeting open:** Mr Norman Bugg wished to thank the Clerk and the Council for the hard work over the past three years to get the verge and paths improved outside of the Kingsland Stores and Post Office.

Cllr B Powell was asked if there were any news with regards to the post box on Bristol Hill, to which he replied that he was still in dealings with the Post Office and a meeting was due to be held soon to look at available options.

Mr G Richens asked if paper towels could be provided for the Bristol Hill public conveniences whilst the hand drier was out of action. The Clerk informed members that the electrician who had recently repaired the hand drier had said that it was not likely to last much longer but that she was not aware that it had broken down again since. Clerk to action.
5. **To approve Minutes of the meeting held 15.12.2016:** It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held.
6. **Administration**
 - (i) To receive Clerk's update: An update was received from the Clerk. The Clerk informed members that the Emergency Plan and play area inspections would be included on the next agenda and asked members to review it ahead of the meeting.
 - (ii) To consider and approve the Parish Council's Vexatious Complainant's Policy: Deferred to the next meeting.
 - (iii) To consider and approve statement re UK Power Networks and Freedom Group and agree meeting/public presentation date: The relevant funding had now been secured by UK Power Network and a meeting with parish council representatives was due to take place the week starting January 30th. The next stage would be to organise a presentation at the village hall in order to inform residents of what was being planned.

- (iv) To consider the proposals put forward by a local resident regarding Terms of Reference to be used and abided by any volunteer groups working on Parish Council owned land: *Cllr R Green declared a non-pecuniary interest at this stage.* Cllr R Green had been maintaining a strip of grassed land in front of his property, "St Helier" at the bottom of Bristol Hill for the last twenty three years and wished to continue to do so. The same maintenance had been carried out by his father long before him. Members agreed that Cllr R Green indeed did a fantastic job and were happy to allow him to continue, subject to his adherence to the SPC Terms of Reference.
- (v) To consider Shotley Open Spaces Scheme of works and financial subsidy: As the Shotley Parish Council Terms of Reference were yet to be approved by the SOS group, this matter would have to be deferred to a future meeting. The scheme of works had been circulated to members but no questions/suggestions had been put forward as yet, therefore it was felt that this document would also need to be deferred to the next meeting. The Clerk asked members to ensure they revised the document ahead of the next meeting.

7. Finance

- (i) To consider and approve accounts for payment and note bank balances: It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment. The bank balances were also noted and the grand total currently being held was £86,646.05. However the Clerk informed members that the future financial position of the Council would not be as healthy as it may appear once members considered the draft budget and precept proposals and its impact on reserves.

1. Clerk salary	£1,325.25
2. HMRC (Tax, NI and Employer NI)	£664.27
3. E Bugg (Shotley Warden)	£184.00
4. Website	£120.00
5. S A Meacock (grass cutting)	£220.00
6. Mr G Richens (SOS-plastic pointer sign 24.10.16)	£46.80
7. Mr A Keeble (litter warden/bin emptying)	£444.95 (December 2016)
8. Mr A Keeble (litter warden/bin emptying)	£390.00 (January 2017)
9. Miss S Ratcliffe (Bristol Hill conveniences)	£352.00
10 Clerk's expenses (stamps, mileage and BT bill)	£126.13
11 Mr G Richens (materials and petrol)	£49.82
12 Shotley Peninsula Cricket Club (approved Nov. 16)	£250.00

- (ii) Request from the Shotley Open Spaces, to increase a monthly maintenance non-accruable budget from £50 to £80 - Deferred to January pending approval of SPC Terms of Reference and subsequent receipt and approval of costed scheme of works proposals: The recommendation from the Finance Working Group had been not to approve this increase and instead to consider specific schemes on their merit at Parish Council meetings. It was important to support local volunteers who helped the Council but it was also important that Terms of Reference were in place and agreed by both parties. There was no reason why this decision could not be reviewed in the future should that be needed.

- (iii) To receive and approve the Finance Working Group's recommendations re. 2nd quarter

accounts: It was resolved to approve the 2nd quarter accounts, as recommended by the Finance Working Group.

- (iv) To receive, consider and approve budget and precept recommendations for 2017/2018: A Finance Working Group meeting had been held in order to consider the budget and precept proposals being put forward to Council. A detailed report was received from the Clerk. In this report were included the figures from the previous financial year, the actual for the year so far and projected to year end and the budget for 2017/2018.

Although there would be no precept referendum this year, the parish council was being asked to justify any increase in precept by newly acquired responsibilities, not regular revenue expenditure.

Increases in expenditure due to other external factors, such as increase in clerk's salary due to FOI requests/legal matters/police enquiries or election costs should not be included in this. With these factors in mind, and on average the possibility of a further £6000 expenditure on election costs alone, as well as £4000 for play area repairs (following inspections), the parish council could find itself in a position where its reserves were reduced to under £20,000 at the end of 2017/2018.

The auditor's recommendation was that one and a half years' worth of revenue expenditure was kept as general reserves and this figure would not be sustainable if the regular amount of funding and maintenance costs was to be kept, therefore these had to be reduced in line with unavoidable projected expenditure.

The Council was therefore asked to exercise prudence in the future and this could mean that funding under Section 137 and others would need to be reduced in line with savings that needed to be made, as there was no possibility of an increase in regular income.

After taking into account all the concerns raised, the precept was agreed at £57,172, the only increase being for £1,217, to cover the loss of the LC tax grant. This would represent an actual increase of 2.18%, reflected as an increase of 1.83% on parishioners' council tax bills and a council tax bill for a Band D property of £78.97. It was also resolved to approve the budget for 2017/2018.

8. Planning matters

- (i) Applications received for recommendation to Babergh District Council:
B/16/01684 10 Great Harlings, erection of single storey rear extension with internal alterations- It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
B/16/01698 Mill Farm House- erection of two storey side extension and first floor balcony and erection of two bay cartlodge with attached gym- It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- (ii) To note Approvals/Refusals: B/16/00659 Shotley Hall, Church Walk- Planning Permission Granted.
- (iii) Planning Correspondence: No further planning correspondence had been received.

- 9. Highways:** proposal to move the village sign, install 2 Q90th benches and Styngnam to Chapel Fields works, including permission from SCC Highways: Unfortunately, due to the reorganisation of the

Highways department and budget cuts, no response had yet been received to the queries put forward by the parish council. This was disappointing as the Parish Council had offered to carry out the works itself, therefore there would be no cost implication to the Highways Department. Cllr B Higgs mentioned the two trees that had fallen down following recent bad weather in Chelmondiston and asked Cllr D Davis if he could relay the need to have these removed from site, as they had only been dragged away from the highway.

District Cllr D Davis explained to members that recent funding and working force cuts, as well as heavy workload, made it difficult for highways to carry out any works unless they were of an urgent nature, as all reports had to be prioritised. There was a new management team and Chief Executive in place and he would be liaising with Mr James Finch in order to address some of the matters reported at the meeting.

The Clerk reported on correspondence received from residents complaining about inconsiderate parking on green verges, as the grass was being churned up and the sites looked unsightly as well as obstructing visibility for other road users. The problem was mainly visible by no 1 Videlou Terrace, in Tudor Close and between the Rose pub and the Post Office. District Cllr D Davis said that the police force was in a similar position as highways, where it would be difficult for them to enforce legislation although a criminal offense was being committed. However it would still be worth reporting such matters to the police. Clerk to write to all residents whose cars were being parked on the areas reported.

10. To note correspondence and agree any response: Most correspondence had been circulated to members. However a number of items had recently been received and were reported.

10.1 Nomination of guest to the Royal Garden Party on May 16th 2017- Members nominated Cllr R Wrinch.

10.2 Request from local resident to store a tyre for exercise purposes at Lloyd Road play area- members agreed that permission could be given subject to it being at owner's risk in case of theft or vandalism and it being removed once it was no longer needed.

10.3 Public notice to change governance arrangements under the Localism Act 2011- noted

10.4 Suffolk Libraries Local- request for meeting with parish council representatives agreed for the following day at 2pm, Cllr B Higgs to attend.

11. Play areas:

(i) To consider quote received for the provision of a "No dogs" sign: A number of quotes and designs were considered by members and it was agreed to purchase two red, black and white "No dogs allowed except guide dogs", as per quote for 210mmx297mm.

(ii) Substitution of safety matting in the Lloyd Road and Kingsland play areas- to receive update: Cllr B Powell gave members a brief update. The matting at the Kingsland play area had already been replaced and the one at Lloyd Road was expected to be finished by the following week. The contractor was congratulated on a god job done so far.

12. Shotley Gate Community Shop project: A brief discussed took place and it was agreed that the matter would be put on hold for the time being until such a time when it might be worth looking at it again.

13. Reports from Councillors on matters not itemised on agenda/to be included in next Agenda (no decisions with a financial implication are permitted to be made at this point and should be added to

a future agenda for consideration): Cllr N Green asked if any other members could volunteer to attend the police liaison meetings as she was unable to due to work commitment. Cllr B Higgs volunteered.

14. Chair's urgent business: any items not on this agenda but of such urgency as to merit, in the Chair's opinion, immediate action: The Chairman referred to the recent damage caused to the sea defences following a surge and members agreed that further discussion would be needed before a decision was made. The chairman also made reference to the fact that he would like to see the pc website much more updated in general.

15. Date of next meeting: 9th February 2017.

16. Suspension of standing orders: *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak*
Meeting open: Mr N Bugg said that Mr W Henry may not be able to attend the meeting with the library representatives the following day but that he would try to attend it himself.

Mr G Richens thanked Cllr R Wrinch for his positive words on how to move forward.

Mr G Richens gave members a breakdown of the number of volunteer hours spent on maintenance works by the Group formerly known as the Stour Footpath Group, with the assistance of the Community Payback Team and external funding. Cllr N Green queried why the Parish Council should be expected to subsidise such works if it did not own the land in question. Cllr G Richens replied that the Parish Council had a responsibility to do so. Further debate ensued on this matter.

Mr G Richens also informed members that at the SOS meeting held that same day, from which Cllr B Powell had been absent, their members had agreed to accept the Shotley Parish Council Terms of Reference for works on parish council owned or maintained land and that if a spare copy was available, he would be happy to sign it there and then. The Clerk asked Mr G Richens if the decision would be minuted for record purposes and this was confirmed by Mr G Richens, who then proceeded to sign the relevant document.

Cllr B Powell asked Mr G Richens when he was likely to bring to the parish council plans for repairs to the damage to gabions and added that to spend a further £400 in granite chippings would be a waste of public funds. Cllr B Powell believed it would be best to use larger stones as they would not be so easily washed away. Mr G Richens replied that a safe walking surface was still going to be needed and that in his experience granite tended to stay in place.

Cllr R Green suggested that professional advice was sought on this matter before a decision was made.

Cllr B Powell added that various experts tended to have such varied views that it would be difficult to reach a decision.

District Cllr D Davis reported on the possibility of applying for play area equipment funding from Ms Kate Lowe, for moneys raised via the carrier bags scheme; he also reported on the issues experienced by residents with the Community Transport Services and how inappropriate some of their decisions had been. Unfortunately it was now too late to make changes as a contract had been signed with the provider, however unsuitable that contract was.

Temporary exclusion of press and public: *That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission at meetings) Act*

1960 the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed

17. Administrative and legal matters: To receive updates and agree any further actions, including website and grass cutting contracts

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 9.30pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____