

## Minutes of the Shotley Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7:15pm at the Shotley Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs B Powell (Chairman), B Higgs (Vice-chairman), N Green, B Nichols, R Wrinch, J Catling, R Green, District Cllr D Davis, Mrs D Bedwell (Parish Clerk) and nine members of the public (Mr and Mrs Kallarn, Mr and Mrs Humphries, Miss H Mortem, Mr and Mrs Colwill, Mr N Bugg and Mr G Richens).

- 1. To receive presentation from Mr B Jenman (AONB Projects Officer):** Cllr B Powell explained to those present that the order of the meeting was slightly different due to the fact that there would be two presentations to the public, who may wish to ask questions. For this reason, the public open session followed the presentation. There would also be a further public session later in the meeting for any further queries that may arise.

A team from UK Power Networks had been at the Village Hall since 4:00pm giving a presentation and answering questions about the underground electricity cabling project. Mr Chris Sugars, the Project Manager for UK Power Networks, gave members some feedback about the session:

- Around forty residents had approached the team with various questions and had looked at the plans on display at the village hall.
- Works were due to commence after the May bank holiday and continue until late November. The scheduled start date would be moved back by a week in order to accommodate the Shotley Flower Festival.
- A liaison person was expected to be on site at all times and detailed information packs would be made available to residents, particularly those who would be most affected by the planned works.

Cllr B Powell thanked Mr Sugars for facilitating the public awareness session and for changing the schedule to ensure a local event would not be adversely affected by the works.

This was followed by a detailed presentation by Mr B Jenman, AONB Projects Officer, Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB.

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was developing a bid to the Lottery for a major new project around the Stour and Orwell estuaries. Suffolk Coasts and Heaths wanted to build on the success of their previous lottery funded Landscape Partnership Schemes, *Touching the Tide* and *Managing a Masterpiece* and had met with members of the Shotley Parish Council to put forward some ideas.

The focus was on practical landscape enhancement and restoration and targeted access improvements that would benefit wildlife, the cultural heritage, and everyone who enjoyed walking or riding through the area. It was hoped that this would, in turn, support the local tourism and economy in general. Working with landowners and local communities, SC&H AONB hoped to take some of the recreational pressure off the more sensitive parts of the estuaries. Just as with previous schemes, the AONB would be leading a wide ranging partnership of organisations. They would also increase the awareness of the area's heritage with events and interpretation. From their initial conversations with potential partners, it appeared there were some strong archaeological and historical stories to tell.

The bid was due to be submitted to the Lottery by the end of May, for work over the next 4/5 years and the target budget was around £1.8m.

Mr B Jenman also referred to possible funding from “undergrounding” electricity cables which was currently available and could be applied for by the AONB for this same project.

Cllr B Powell informed Mr B Jenman that he had personally been looking at the cost of resurfacing the Shotley Village Hall car park and had got as far as getting two quotes for the works. Cllr B Powell asked if Mr Jenman could help the Parish Council secure some of this or other funding towards the costs of improving the village hall car park. Mr B Jenman stated that he would be unable to help the Parish Council with that particular application and other funding avenues should be considered, such as Community Grants Schemes. Cllr B Powell added that he would be asking Parish Council members to consider a proposal to use the existing VOTY fund of £1,500 as a starting point and asked if this could be used for match funding. Mr B Jenman still believed that he would be unable to assist with funding for this project but agreed to look into it.

Cllr B Powell added that the recent accreditation gained by “Walkers are Welcome” had attracted some £9,000 worth of funding. Due to Shotley’s location it was clear that walkers from outside of the village would need parking facilities and the village hall car park would be the ideal location. Mr B Jenman said that he had no involvement with the “Walkers are Welcome” scheme in Shotley or the funds the group may have.

When asked about the existing sea defences and the need for an additional £300,000 for what would in effect be Phase 3 (repairs and renewals of sheet piles/ gabions), Mr B Jenman explained that although the Lottery funding did not directly pay towards sea defences costs, some work to the coastal paths may be eligible if it could be proven that it was necessary.

Mr B Jenman was thanked for attending an earlier meeting with Parish Councillors and for the presentation given at the Parish Council meeting.

- 2. Suspension of standing orders:** *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak:* **Meeting open:** Mrs S Kallarn asked if there were any news about the replacement post box on Bristol Hill. Cllr B Powell informed the public that although the Post Office had been chased on many occasions and a number of possible solutions had been put forward to them, the matter remained outstanding, which was very frustrating but unfortunately out of the hands of the Parish Council.

Mr N Bugg reported that the manhole cover outside the old police house in Shotley was very thin and could become dangerous.

- 3. Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received (and were approved) from Cllrs M Williams and P Merrin. Apologies had also been received from District Councillor P Patrick and County Cllr D Woods (observing *Purdah*).
- 4. Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda and additions to register:** Cllr R Wrinch declared a pecuniary interest on item 7 (ii) 10.

## **5. Reports**

- (i) County Councillor’s report: A report was not available as Cllr D Woods was observing *Purdah*.
- (ii) District Councillor’s report: Apologies and a brief report from Cllr P Patrick had been received. A verbal report was received from District Cllr D Davis, including:

- Babergh District Council had created an investment company which was run alongside the Council
- Babergh had been recognised as the 25<sup>th</sup> best district in the country to live in- however the fusion of the data with Mid Suffolk District Council’s meant that an accurate breakdown was not available
- The property at no. 16 Queensland was being looked into by Babergh in order for a decision to be made about its future
- The Gate Farm caravan park continued to be investigated by the Enforcement Team; The Safe Neighbourhood Team was also aware of some allegations of criminal activity on site and a profile was being built
- Shotley had been nominated for National Village of the Year
- BDC had secured some funding to be used in Shotley, as it had been identified as a centre for possible economic development - Shotley Peninsula Tourism Action Group (TAG) had been very helpful in achieving this

**6. To approve Minutes of the meeting held 16.03.2017:** Subject to the substitution of “Cllr D Davis” for “Cllr D Woods” on section 4 (ii), it was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held.

## **7. Finance**

- (i) To approve expenditure for the Annual Parish Meeting: It was resolved to approve expenditure between £150 and £200.
- (ii) To consider and approve accounts for payment and note bank balances: Current account £26,692.98, Tracker account £456.46 and Deposit account £43,345.50, therefore a grand total of £70,494.94. It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment, as follows:

### **Payments:**

1. Clerk salary	£1,241.30
2. HMRC ( Tax, NI and Employer NI)	£284.78
3. Clerk’s expenses	£221.75
4. E Bugg (Shotley Warden)	£176.00
5. Mr D Davis (Website)	£120.00
6. S A Meacock (grass cutting)	£220.00
7. Mr A Keeble (Shotley Gate Warden)	£428.38
8. Miss S Ratcliffe (Bristol Hill conveniences)	£385.00
9. SCC street lighting maintenance and energy (replacement cheque)	£1,197.91
10. Redhill Farms (allotments- 2016)	£360.00
11. Mr D Bateman (hand drier installation wc’s)	£95.00
12. Marine Management Organisation - £1,222.00- still being disputed but regular monthly statement being received.	

### **Receipts:**

1. Mr T Lawford-Randall (Chairman’s Allowance balance refund)	£85.00
2. Mrs H Collins bench (Heritage Park)	£521.49

- (iii) To consider funding the provision of internet access at the village hall for use by the Library Project: A brief report was received from Cllr B Nichols. The mobile internet access currently available to the library was sufficient to meet their requirements and it may not be necessary for the Parish Council to fund a more permanent service for the time being.

The Shotley Primary School only had a very slow internet connection and did not currently have WI-FI due to the cost, therefore children and teachers alike would potentially benefit from such a facility should that be available. In fact, upon hearing of the possibility of accessing the internet via the library project, teachers had been extremely positive.

Members agreed that although the Parish Council may not need to provide it for this purpose, ie the library, it could still be considered as a facility for the village as a whole at a later date. Cllr N Green expressed some disappointment at the fact that the local school was unable to afford internet facilities in 2017! Cllr R Wrinch explained that he had been in dealings with a number of internet service providers for the past four years through his business, that eventually a site on high ground would be needed for the mast installation and that the primary school could be a prime candidate for that in exchange for cheaper/cost neutral provision. Further enquiries to be made by Cllr R Wrinch on this matter in due course.

- (iv) To consider application for funding from the Shotley & Erwarnton Good Neighbours: Deferred as application was not received.
- (v) To consider funding application from the Shotley Drama Group: Deferred as application was not received.

## 8. Planning matters

- (i) To consider applications received from Babergh District Council: B/17/00890 Old School House, School Road - Trim 1 no. Conifer (A), reduce 1 no. Silver Birch by 30% (B), raise and thin 4 no. Sycamore trees (C & E), fell to ground level 1 fruit tree to the left of the building (D) and trim 1 no. Ilex bush (E): It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- (ii) To note Approvals/Refusals:
- a) **B/17/00143 Red House Farm**, Wades Lane- Application for listed building consent- Erection of conservatory following demolition of existing conservatory - **Planning Permission Granted.**
  - b) **B/17/00177 Thorn cottage**, Main Road- Erection of extension to link main building with outbuilding and alterations to outbuilding (resubmission of approved scheme B/14/00114) - **Planning Permission Granted.**
- (ii) Planning Correspondence: No further planning correspondence had been received.

9. **Damage to gabions following surge:** To receive update and agree any associated expenditure: Cllr B Powell had met with companies and gone through the options available to the Parish Council: One option was to build a structure in front of the existing section of single file gabions, which was the most problematic area, in order to strengthen it and extent its life expectancy; the other was to remove it altogether and start again, which was far too costly. Cllr B Powell was of the view that that section of gabions was not of prime importance and if Phase 3 sea defences did go ahead, it could be included as part of the project then.

When works had originally been carried out, discussion with all the different bodies had taken place and it was very clear that they all seemed to have very strong views about what was and was not permitted or acceptable. The implications of the area being SSSI and AONB added to the complexity.

The Clerk suggested the Parish Council should meet with the representatives of all the relevant bodies in order to ascertain how the project could successfully and lawfully be moved forward (as had been recommended).

Speaking from the public gallery, Mr G Richens stated that all the relevant bodies had already been consulted and all the relevant permissions had been granted for Phase 3 to go ahead. The Clerk explained to Mr G Richens that the purpose of such a meeting would be to ensure that all members of the council were fully aware of the details of the project so that the Parish Council did not run the risk of finding itself in a position where only a select number could progress matters, as this could leave the Parish Council in a vulnerable position again.

It was resolved that discussion would continue on this matter until a decision could finally be reached.

- 10. Highways:** To consider disabled access provision between Estuary Road and Lower Harlings: update: Cllr B Powell had met with a representative of SCC Highways on site and this was being looked into. Deferred to the next meeting.
- 11. To consider Mr M Patel's offer of a picnic table and agree where to site it** (including any possible expenditure): Following the closure of the local pizzeria, Mr Patel had kindly donated one of the picnic tables for use by the Parish Council. It was agreed that the table should be installed at the Kingsland play area, near the trees adjacent to the play equipment. It would need to be concreted it, therefore a budget ceiling of £50 for labour and materials was agreed for this purpose. The Parish Council wished to thank Mr Patel for his kind generosity.
- 12. To consider proposal to use monies from the Village of the Year Award (£1,500) towards improvements to the Shotley Village Hall car park, including to receive and consider quotes:** The Clerk gave members a brief update on the position of the VOTY fund, which was currently in reserves awaiting a decision (a number of proposals had previously been put forward but a decision was yet to be reached).

Cllr B Powell asked members to consider using this fund towards the refurbishment of the Village Hall car park, which he had been looking into for some time. Cllr B Powell had met with two contractors and had received two quotes. However, the cost was higher than he had anticipated and additional funding would be needed. Cllr B Powell suggested that if the council was prepared to put forward the existing £1,500 and, hypothetically speaking, an additional amount from Parish Council reserves, then it would be easier to apply for external, matched funding. A brief discussion ensued and a number of points were raised: The Parish Council's budget for funding was very limited; Would a smoother surface encourage anti-social behaviour by way of car-racing (which was routinely an issue on Bristol Hill) and would the cost of re-grading it not be cheaper?

Cllr N Green also asked why the Parish Council was getting so highly involved with a village hall project, as it should be led by the Village Hall Management Committee and its members.

Mr N Bugg explained that the re-grading had been tried before but had not worked due to the larger size vehicles that used the area. The four corners were the most problematic spots and

although the quotes received appeared high, the improved surface would last for a considerable long time. With the recent success of Walkers are Welcome (the car park had been full of walkers who had parked their cars there very recently), the car park would be even more used and would benefit from any improvements.

Cllr B Higgs agreed that the car park would benefit from any improvements and suggested that parishioners could be encouraged to sponsor improvements, just like items such as benches and tables. The Clerk reminded members that the majority of assets funded in this way had been of memorial significance.

It was agreed that the VOTY funding would remain in reserves, that the elected County Councillor would be approached for locality budget funding in due course and that Mr N Bugg would approach the Village Hall Management Committee in order to find out how much funding they would be willing to put towards the village car park improvements to assist the Parish Council in progressing this project.

**13. To consider request from Mr J Brett to carry out metal detecting on Parish Council owned / maintained land:** Following advice received by the Parish Council, it was resolved not to approve this request.

**14. Administration:** To receive Clerk's update: A brief update was received. The Clerk had e-mailed the SOS group following the last Parish Council meeting and had relayed the exceptions and requirements that would enable the operation of the group's schedule of works. Unfortunately the three requirements had not been adhered to during a previous work session, which could be problematic for the Parish Council from a public liability insurance point of view. The Clerk had also informed the SOS group of the Council's decision to allow funding to be claimed on a quarterly basis rather than monthly, which would allow greater spending flexibility.

Mr G Richens, speaking from the public gallery, asked a number of questions pertaining to the aforementioned requirements, which were answered by the Clerk. Mr G Richens then agreed that in future Mrs Scholfield from the SOS group would e-mail the Clerk the information required. Mr G Richens also said that a monthly report would be reinstated and forwarded to the Council. Members took the opportunity to thank the SOS group for the work recently carried out to the path near the primary school.

**15. To note correspondence received and agree any response needed: Two further items had been received by the Clerk which required members responses:**

Communication no 1 – A member of the public sought clarification on a matter that had been noted on the minutes of December 15<sup>th</sup>: a bench and steps at the Heritage Park had been reported as being unsafe by a member of the public but confirmed as being safe after being checked by a member of the SOS group.

However, on the SOS website, the "Costs" section of the "Maintenance Schedule 2017" implied that because the monthly Parish Council funding of £50 had already been spent in that month, the SOS had been unable to top up the granite chippings in the said steps. The parishioner who had sent this correspondence believed both statements were contradictory and had asked if a corrective statement would be issued by the SOS group.

Members understood how such statements could be misconstrued and reflect negatively on the Parish Council, as it was the Parish Council who granted the funding referred to.

Cllr B Powell asked a member of the SOS group present if they wished to make a statement, to which the response was negative.

There was some disappointment that this matter had been raised at the meeting but the Clerk informed members that this parishioner had specifically asked for this to be the case. The Clerk reminded members that former councillors had themselves set a precedent by doing exactly that and that if this matter had not been noted as requested, the said parishioner could exercise their right by raising it during the public session.

Mr S Humphries, in the public gallery, identified himself at this point as the resident who had asked the Clerk to raise the issue because he had felt aggrieved that he had been made to look bad as he had been the person who had reported the steps and bench at the Heritage Park at the December meeting and he had been told by Mr G Richens that there was nothing wrong with them at the time.

Mr G Richens confirmed that now the accrued funding was available, any such repair works could be carried out.

Communication no. 2- This correspondence referred to the Heritage Park: The sender was of the view that a lot of work had been carried out at great expense in some areas, whilst other sections had just been left when they should have been opened up and cleared, particularly the large section near the new houses at end of Lower Harlings. The sender would prefer public funds to be spent in opening up some of the areas to residents and visitors alike, perhaps with the addition of seating areas as they were very good viewing spots, rather than on excessive signage and similar items.

Members discussed the various points raised by this parishioner. There were questions asked as to why such areas had not been cleared at the time, when the land had been purchased by the Parish Council. In addition, slats of wood appeared to have been nailed to trees at the bottom of the cliff, which were impeding access. As it was bird nesting season, no clearance works to the brambles in question would take place until late summer. Speaking from the public gallery, Mr G Richens informed members that Mr I Peters would be best placed to advise the council, as he had before when the Woodland and Estuary survey had been carried out, as to the reasons why this and other areas had been left undisturbed.

The Clerk reminded members that some matters pertaining to the Heritage Park had already been considered and decided upon at a previous meeting but that information remained confidential for the time being.

**16. 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 B Nichols asked if Mr S Hyland could be asked for an update on Muntjack deer.

Cllr B Higgs reported that the state in which the BT box in Kitchener Way was left by engineers, with strips of wire on the ground littering the area, was not good practise and was unacceptable.

Cllr N Green asked if the VOTY banners should come down. However, until another village was awarded the same accolade, Shotley remained the Village of the Year and it was agreed the signage should remain in place accordingly.

**17. Chair's urgent business:** any items not on this agenda but of such urgency as to merit, in the Chair's opinion, immediate action: Cllr B Powell had no urgent matters as such but wished to inform members that all the issues recently reported about the play areas had been dealt with.

**18. Date of next meeting:** 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (Annual Parish Council Meeting) and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (Annual Parish Meeting).

**19. Suspension of standing orders:** *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak:* **Meeting open:** There were no further comments from the public.

**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*

**20. Administrative and legal matters-** To receive updates and agree any further actions:

- (i) Contracts
- (ii) Approval of legal documents
- (iii) To consider nominations for the Shotley Parish Council Community Awards 2017

**With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10.55pm.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_