

Minutes of a meeting of the Shotley Parish Council held on Thursday 20th July 2017 at 7:15pm at the Shotley Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs B Powell (Chairman), N Green, R Green, R Wrinch and Mrs D Bedwell (Parish Clerk).

County and District Councils: Cllr D Woods and Cllr D Davis.

Public gallery: Mr and Mrs Humphries, Mr and Mrs Kallarn, Mr N Bugg and Mr A Peters.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received from Cllrs B Nichols, M Williams, B Higgs, J Catling and P Merrin. Apologies had also been received from District Cllr P Patrick, who had e-mailed a brief report to members.
- 2. Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda and additions to register:** None received.

3. Reports

- (i) County Councillor's report: Cllr D Woods report alluded to the proposed 20% rise in the Council Lead's allowance, whilst that of members was only 11% and the lack of diversity within the council and how it was not representative of its electorate, with a majority of Councillors being "middle aged white males with a second income". There was also concern that Committee meetings were to be held in confidence, which raised concerns about openness and transparency.

Cllr Woods had been working with the governing body and the Stutton Primary School's Headmistress, who had come out of retirement in answer to a public plea for help. Contrary to rumours, Stutton Primary School would not be closing down straight away and all efforts were being made to keep it open.

Cllr Woods stressed that every school on the Peninsula relied on children out of catchment and how important this was.

- (ii) District Councillor's report: Cllr D Davis reiterated Cllr D Woods concern for the lack of diversity within the Council and had recently been invited to Radio Suffolk to talk about the proposed increases in member's allowances.

Cllr D Davis had recently given a talk at a meeting of the Woolverstone Parish Council, also attended by the Shotley Clerk, on matters pertaining to Babergh DC Planning and the consultation process currently being undertaken.

Cllr Davis report also included the recent landslide above the flats being built at the bottom of the Bristol Hill Caravan Park (inspected by BDC officers) and the instigation of enforcement action against the Gate Farm Road caravan park. It appeared that the BDC Enforcement Team was not being supported enough by BDC due to a lack of resources.

Members raised concern that the 13 mobile homes for which permission had been granted should be of a style that made them easy to move, not like the ones currently on the site. The construction works currently being undertaken also appeared to be contrary to planning permissions.

There was also a legal requirement to log the length of time people stayed on the site by way of a register. Was this being monitored?

Cllr Davis reported on recent events and developments and expressed his gratitude to a number of local groups and organisations. He was asked if the recently advertised vacancy for a Community Officer was really necessary and if there was any update?

The Peninsula was doing so much more, particularly since the creation of the Tourism Action Group that such a position appeared justifiable but Cllr D Davis had not been involved with the process.

- 4. To approve Minutes of the meeting held 15.06.2017 and Extraordinary meeting held 27.06. 2017:** It was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held 15.06.2017 but to defer the minutes of 27.06.2017.
- 5. To note any response received from the SOS group regarding some of the issues raised by the Parish Council at the meeting held 27.06.2017:** E-mails had been received from Mr Gary Richens, on behalf of the S.O.S Group, which stated the following:

On July 7th 2017 - Thank you for your response to my e-mail of 30th June. SOS is aware of the meeting of the Parish Council on 27th June. Please forward the minutes of this meeting to me with specific questions that you require SOS to address. You again refer to a 'reply' being requested from SOS. I will reply to the issue of SOS considering the withdrawal of its cooperation with SPC once the full extent of the outcome of your meeting of 27th June is understood".

On July 8th 2017 - "Further to my previous reply (SOS still required minutes of your meeting of 27 June and your specific questions) I can confirm that that the problems that SOS had with the SLA that SPC had agreed with Sodexo were resolved at your meeting of 18 May and therefore cooperation with SPC has not been withdrawn.

Our next Sodexo working party in the Heritage Park has already been scheduled. If anyone has a view that SOS cooperation with SPC had been withdrawn they have been misinformed".

This reply appeared to address the issue of "non-cooperation" between both groups. The remaining issues raised by the Parish Council would be dealt under the confidential section of the meeting due to its nature.

- 6. Suspension of standing orders:** *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak-*
Meeting open: Mrs P Humphreys expressed her disappointment at the content of the Shotley Open Spaces Group minutes and how the Shotley Parish Council had been misrepresented. According to Mrs Humphreys, who had attended a number of Parish Council meetings, it was clear that the Parish Council had tried their best to accommodate the requests of Shotley Open Spaces, had provided the Group with funding and remained dignified even after the way the Group had treated the Parish Council. There was a slight altercation between Mrs Humphreys and Mrs Kallarn, who was asked by Mrs Humphreys to refrain from interrupting her when she was exercising her right to speak as a member of the public.

Mr S Humphreys added that although the Parish Council seemed to do everything in its power to support the Group, it still did not stop some members of it from trying to discredit the Parish Council and do as they wished without seemingly having any concern for consequences.

Cllr R Wrinch informed members of the public that the Parish Council was a tier of Local Government and as such had to abide by strict legislation, unlike the Shotley Open Spaces Group, which was a volunteer group that was not accountable to or controlled by anyone. Cllr R Wrinch agreed that it would be right to get the Parish Council's position out in the public domain quicker so that there wasn't an "in limbo" period between meetings. This may also help dissipate the apparent lack of action between meetings.

Cllr R Green agreed that publishing draft minutes would get any message out to the public faster. These could include a disclaimer to make readers aware that they were in draft form and subject to change.

Cllr N Green added that the low public attendance at meetings made it difficult for parishioners to know the facts and that unfortunately people seemed to believe what was posted on social media, which was not always accurate.

It was saddening that the village had become divided because of errors of judgement committed by people who, originally, had wanted to do good things for their community. And whilst good things continued to be done, some actions were border line and were the cause of a very disappointing gap between groups.

There was some concern as to whether the gap would ever be closed but members remained positive that it would and agreed that the Parish Council should not stop making an effort.

It was agreed that a positive way forward would be to get the Parish Council's message out as soon as possible so that parishioners would be made aware of facts.

Mr S Humphreys explained that he had tried to set records straight with other residents when he was approached and given information which he knew to be untrue.

Cllr N Green expressed some disappointment that District Cllr D Davis had repeatedly referred to and praised a particular local group and had omitted or made very small reference to others, including the Parish Council. Cllr D Davis argued that credit should be given where it was due and that, in his view, the group had done a lot for the village and should be praised. Cllr N Green added that it seemed excessive that he had referred to this group on three different occasions.

Mr P Kallarn said that he had lived in the village for over three years and that he had repeatedly asked the Parish Council to do something about the overgrowth from the Bristol Hill Caravan Park. The Parish Council had been unable to deal with this matter; however the SOS group had managed to cut the overgrowth back recently.

Mr Kallarn also alluded to the issue of diversity within the Councils raised by both County and District Councillors earlier in the meeting. He stated that the emphasis seemed to be on diversity and, in his view, it should be a case of getting the best person for the job. A middle aged white male with a second income should not be discounted as a good representative, and an older person had a lot to offer due to their life experience, which should be valued. He added that if diversity was at the forefront, he knew the details of a good candidate, who was twenty-one years old and a member of the KKK.

County Cllr D Woods explained that he had been referring to the 75 councillors currently representing Suffolk, of which only one was a young mother and one a disabled person, which did not seem to be a fair representation of the County.

Cllr R Wrinch gave a brief report on the recent maintenance works on Church Walk in preparation for the UK Power Networks road closure. UK Power Networks had agreed to pay for the works and a local farmer had been lined up to carry them out. However, it had taken a number of hours and numerous telephone calls/e-mails between the Clerk, SCC Highways, UK Power Networks and Cllr Wrinch to get the relevant permissions for works to go ahead.

7. Finance

- (i) To consider funding application from the "First Responders": Deferred.
- (ii) To consider funding application from "It's good to talk": Deferred.
- (iii) To consider funding application from "Tiffers, the bus shelter": A donation of £50 towards the launch event was approved by members.
- (iv) To receive update and re-consider request for financial support from Suffolk Coasts & Heaths AONB for the production and printing of the next edition of the Shotley Walk Explorer Guide (£800): The Parish Council was unable to reach a decision at this point and the request was deferred.
- (v) To consider and approve expenditure for maintenance works between Styngnam Cottages and Chapel Fields: Cllr R Wrinch volunteered to organise the works and the cost implication to the council would be the cost of the fuel, which was agreed by members.
- (vi) To consider and approve accounts for payment and note bank balances: It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment, as follows:

a) Clerk salary	£1,241.30
b) HMRC (Tax, NI and Employer NI)	£284.78
c) E Bugg (Shotley Warden)	£176.00
d) Community Action Suffolk- Website Training	£48.00
e) Mr A Keeble (Shotley Gate Warden)	£420.00
f) Miss S Ratcliffe (Bristol Hill conveniences)	£374.00
g) S A Meacock (grass cutting)	£220.00
h) Mr G Richens SOS sundries (strimmer fluid)	£19.49
i) PHS Group- (bin emptying at public conveniences)	£80.09
j) BDC- Annual lease Kingsland	£25.00
k) Mr G Richens (SOS sundries- postcrete)	£15.45
l) A Pettersson (SOS sundries- misc)	£47.65
m) Marine Management Organisation -	£1,222.00 - still being disputed
- (vii) To consider and approve any amendments to the annual accounts for year ended 31 March 2017 and supporting documents: No amendments to be considered at this point.
- (viii) To approve the notes of the Finance Working Group meeting held 8.06. 2017 (deferred)

8. Planning matters

- (i) To consider applications received from Babergh District Council: B/17/0315 1 Old School House, School Road - Application for works to trees (covered by TPO's): It appeared the trees this application referred to were within the Ganges site and therefore any application would be expected to originate from the site owners, not the Old School House. It was resolved that the Clerk should contact the BD Planning Department in order to ask further questions about this application, and to not make any recommendations at present.
- (ii) To note Approvals/Refusals: No additional refusals/approvals had been received.
- (iii) Planning Correspondence: There had been no further correspondence.

- 9. UK Power Networks project:** To receive update: A brief update was given by Cllr R Wrinch. The boring under the Orwell River had been completed and works had just about finished on Old Hall Hill. Works would continue on the main road at a rate of 300m at a time. The planning applications for the two chalk pads needed for the storage of the soil extracted during the process had been submitted to Babergh DC. If successful, this would enable UK Power Networks to store the soil for a period of up to 12 months at Mr R Wrinch's farm rather than have to transport it out of the Peninsula at a cost of many, many lorry loads, which would not only be very costly but would also have a significant impact on the traffic on the B1456 and the environment. Cllr R Wrinch was thanked for his efforts in trying to find a solution to this problem and fingers would be kept crossed that planning permission would be granted in due course.
- 10. Anglian Water- Bristol Hill pumping station improvements-** To receive update: The Clerk read out the press release received from Anglian Water.
- 11. Armistice Day Commemorations 2018:** To consider correspondence received and agree any actions: It was agreed that such a special date should be fully supported by the Parish Council and members who had lost relatives in the War felt particularly compelled to get involved.
- 12. To consider gift of a defibrillator unit and approve installation and associated costs:** It was agreed that this kind offer should be accepted and that Shotley Marina would be approached with a view to it being housed there.
- 13. To receive update on proposed undergrounding of overhead electric lines** (part of the Stour & Orwell Landscape Partnership Scheme): A report was received from Cllr R Wrinch.
- 14. To consider the Shotley Heritage Community Benefit Society Ltd offer of one share free of charge** (Shotley Pier project) to the Parish Council: There was a concern that by accepting the offer, the Parish Council could be precluding itself from being able to consider any matters pertaining to the project in the future, due to the implications of a pecuniary interest being declared. Advice was being sought from SALC's legal services, therefore it was agreed to defer this decision.
- 15. Highways:** To receive update and consider any actions needed with a financial implication: The Clerk read out the most recent communication in which she continued to chase SCC Highways on a number of pending matters, which the Parish Council was unable to progress, unless the appropriate permissions were given.

Reference was made to the maintenance works on Bristol Hill mentioned earlier in the meeting. The Parish Council had reported these to Highways on a number of occasions and even District Cllr D Davis had tried to instigate enforcement action against the land owners, who had not observed their responsibility for dealing with this overgrowth, but unfortunately both the Parish Council and Cllr D Davis had been unsuccessful in their previous attempts.

- 16. Request from a resident to place a sponsored memorial item along the waterfront:** to receive update and agree action: It had previously been agreed that items such as benches/seats would no longer be permitted, as the area had reached saturation point. There was also a concern that as the Parish Council did not own that stretch of land, it could not guarantee their longevity or security, which was particularly concerning due to the emotive nature of the items in question.

It had been suggested that a tree was planted instead, with which this particular resident had been in agreement.

Members discussed the possibility of a local land owner donating a strip of land which would be used solely for such memorial/remembrance gestures. For consideration at a later date.

- 17. Administration:** To receive Clerk's report: The Clerk's report was read out to members.
- 18. To note any further correspondence received and agree any response needed:** All correspondence received was noted and no further action was needed.
- 19. 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): There had been a report that a parishioner had suffered a fall whilst walking in Shotley Gate, according to Cllr N Green. Cllr R Green agreed to speak with the parishioner in question in order to ascertain if the Parish Council could be of assistance.
- 20. Chair's urgent business:** any items not on this agenda but of such urgency as to merit, in the Chair's opinion, immediate action: There was no Chairman's urgent business.
- 21. Date of next meeting:** To consider whether to hold a meeting in August as discussed previously (17th August): It would not be possible to not hold a meeting this coming August. However, it was suggested that if next year the September meeting was brought forward, it might facilitate this option.
- 22. Suspension of standing orders:** *Meeting open for 5 minutes to allow members of the public to speak:*
Meeting open- Mrs P Humphreys had wished to ask Mr D Davis a number of questions but he had left the meeting. Mrs Humphries referred to recent posts on a social media site initiated by former members of the Parish Council about Mr D Davis' contractual position as website editor for the parish council. Mr D Davis had not responded to any of the posts, which he could have done and may have helped clarify matters to the unknowing members of the public. Mrs Humphries herself had attended previous meetings where website editing issues had been raised and these had also been included in some of the minutes, therefore she had been somewhat surprised at some of the reactions.

It was explained to Mrs Humphreys that decisions pertaining to contracts would have been made during the confidential section of meetings in order to protect contractor's interests but that a decision had been reached by the Parish Council to end the said contract and that the editing of the website would be carried out in-house, at no additional cost to the Council. The Council had a duty to seek value for money and in order to do so had reviewed all its contracts, which already had or were in the process of being advertised for tender.

It was confirmed that neither Mr D Davis nor any member of the public had contacted the parish council through its proper channels and asked any questions about this matter.

Mrs Humphreys stated that it was ironic that the additional unnecessary expenditure that certain individuals had caused the Council was the reason why the parish council was having to cut back and reduce expenditure.

Further comments were made regarding social media posts about the Parish Council, other local groups and certain individuals, how inappropriate it all seemed and how unfortunate it was that some people chose to express views in this manner rather than use a professional and sensible approach.

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*

23. Administrative and legal matters:

- (i) To approve the Confidential minutes of the meeting held 15.06.2017: It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held.
- (ii) To approve the Confidential notes of the Finance Working Group meeting held 8 June 2017-Deferred.
- (iii) To receive and consider legal advice regarding the S.O.S. minutes of 18th May 2017 and consider any actions to take: The legal advice received was considered by members and a decision reached with regards to the next action that would be taken by the Parish Council (as per confidential notes). Further discussions to take place at the next meeting.

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 10.35pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____