

## **POLSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013 in Polstead Village Hall at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs John Baxter (Chairman), Amanda Flather, Bruce Martin (arrived late), Phil Page, Peter Patrick (arrived late) and Nick Palmer.

**Attending:** Sue Wigglesworth (Babergh District Councillor), PCSO Bignell, Dave Crimmin (Clerk) and 3 members of public.

### **13/022 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs MacWillson sent her apologies (holiday). David Yorke-Edwards (Suffolk County Councillor) and PCSO Coleman also sent their apologies.

### **13/023 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### **13/024 Requests for Dispensation**

No dispensation requests received.

### **13/025 Minutes of Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **13/026 Reports from County and District Councillors and Suffolk Constabulary**

The reports are contained in Appendix A.

**Cllr Martin arrived.**

### **13/027 Reports and Question from Councillors**

There were none.

### **13/028 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman updated councillors on the following issues:

- i. Flooding on Footpath 15 which he has referred to SCC Right of Ways
- ii. The need to pay the Clerk overtime, for the first time since his appointment, in line with his contract of employment
- iii. The need for councillors to review the Polstead website and feed any additional requirements to Richard Sandford
- iv. Donald Simpson had now mounted the memorial plaques on the trees at the playing field and wished to congratulate him on an excellent job.

### **13/029 Reports and Questions from Parishioners**

Mrs Clarke of Old Kersey Road raised the issue of the grass not being maintained on the junction with the A1071 which means that drivers are often turning blind at the junction. The Chairman will use this information in the ongoing discussions with SCC Highways on trying to get this stretch of the A1071 a reduced speed limit of 40mph. Mrs Clarke also raised issues on street parking and post boxes.

### **13/030 Clerk's Report (Appendix B)**

Following a review of the Clerk's Report there were no further actions required of the Clerk.

### **13/031 Correspondence (Appendix C)**

Following a review of the Correspondence the councillors raised items on the email correspondence circulated as follows:

- i. PPC has no comments on BDC's staffing consultation
- ii. AONB grants which will be on the March agenda
- iii. BDC's Strategic Tenancy Policy consultation which will be on the March agenda

**Cllr Patrick arrived**

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- iv. Cllr Palmer will circulate a draft response to councillors before the Clerk responds to National Grid's Scoping Report ahead of the deadline of the 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Planning Inspectorate were unable to grant a request from PPC to allow a response following its March meeting.

#### 13/032 Planning

- a. The councillors reviewed **Planning Application B/12/01301/FUL Land north, 12 White Street Green** - Erection of 1 & 1/2 storey dwelling building and detached garage on land adjacent to 12 White Street Green, Polstead. The councillors were disappointed that further clarification from Natural England had not been obtained by the LPA on the Environmentally Sensitive Agreement that is applicable to the proposed development site. The councillors would also like clarification on the issue of access to the site over common land and how the applicant has the right currently. The councillors felt that these areas required clarification before they could give a considered response on the application.
- b. No further planning application had been received since the agenda was posted.
- c. The status of planning applications, enforcement referrals and appeals previously reviewed by PPC were as follows:

Date	Application Reference	Address	Planning Details	PPC Minute	Parish Council Comments	Babergh DC Comments
26/10/11	B/11/00755/FHA	Mayflower, Stackwood Road	Non-material amendments for insertion of 2 no. rooflights to rear roofslope; insertion of 1 no. window to rear elevation; insertion of roller shutter garage doors in lieu of approved side hung timber doors; and internal alterations.	11/184b	Hung doors preferred to roller shutters.	
	APP/D3505/A/1 2/2177870/NWF	Land North of Sprotts Hall, Holt Road	Appeal against refusal of B/12/00517/FUL	12/139e	No further comments	Appeal dismissed 12/12/2012
07/12/12	B/12/01445/FUL	Bower House Farm, Bower House Tye	Erection of dwelling for farm manager / stockman.	13/011a	No objections	
21/12/13	B/12/01483/FUL	Glenalmond, Heath Road	Erection of two-storey dwelling and a singlegarage utilising existing vehicular access.	13/011b	Objected	

#### 13/033 Finance

- a. All cheques signed and due for signing, as itemised in Appendix D, were authorised by the councillors. The councillors also noted the income received since the last meeting and reviewed the Statement of Accounts against the budget and the Bank Statements against the reconciliation.
- b. The councillors reviewed the communication from BDC which covered the issues that they want PPC to consider following the receipt of the 2013 / 2014 Precept Upon Charging Authority from PPC for £16,500. The Precept set by PPC is the same as the current year. Due to Government changes to the Tax Base calculation, which has taken out households on Housing Benefit, homes being empty etc, Polstead's Tax Base will reduce from 383 to 344 and despite not increasing the Precept this would normally lead to an increase of Council Tax paid by each household. The Government has provide BDC with funding to ensure that households do not pay extra council tax this year because of the Tax Base change and BDC will be giving a grant of £1,525 to PPC which would mean a 1.1% increase in Council tax in 2013 / 2014.

However, BDC has warned PPC that there is:

- a. No guarantee that they will be able to give PPC a grant in 2014 / 2015
- b. The prospect of a Council Tax referendum trigger being introduced by the Government on Town and Parish Councils.

BDC has informed PPC that currently the Precept Upon Charing Authority of £16,500 will be netted to £14,975 (£16,500 - £1,525) unless PPC informs them to the contrary. After reviewing the alternative options and being uncomfortable with the prospect of a referendum trigger being based on a net Precept of £14,975, the councillors resolved by a majority to request BDC to give it a Precept of £16,500 and additionally provide the grant of £1,525. This will mean an increase to the Band D Council Tax household of 11.4% (9p per week).

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- c. The councillors resolved to ask David Yorke-Edwards to see if he can give a grant of £2,000 from his Locality Budget towards the costs of the pond maintenance in the parish. The councillors hope to create a community led project to undertake the maintenance programme.
- d. It was agreed to review the request from Community Woodland at the March meeting when all other donation requests will be considered.

#### **13/034 Highways and Footpaths**

A couple of issues regarding footpaths are being monitored by SCC Right of Ways and there is an ongoing dialogue with SCC Highways on the pot holes appearing in the village.

#### **13/035 National Grid**

The Clerk has requested a hard copy of the Bramford to Twinstead Power Line Scoping Report from National Grid. No action is currently taking place with regard to the Community Forum.

#### **13/036 Neighbourhood Plan**

PPC are still awaiting a response from BDC on its request for support in producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllrs Baxter and Palmer will meet Suffolk ACRE on the 5<sup>th</sup> March to review the options available.

#### **13/037 Polstead Emergency Plan**

The councillors resolved to produce 350 copies of the Emergency Plan questionnaire for circulation to residents as well as registering under the Data Protection Act with regard to the information being held and agreed a budget of £100. *LGA 1972 s 142*

#### **13/038 Village Show including Hog Roast**

Cllr Baxter reported a very positive response to the suggestion of merging the Hog Roast with the Village Show. The councillors agreed a date of Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July for the event which will be suggested to the first meeting of the organising committee.

#### **13/039 Risk Register**

After reviewing the Risk Register the councillors considered that it was appropriate for PPC's operations. Cllrs Martin and Page to undertake the risk review of the playing field and play equipment areas and report back to the next meeting.

#### **13/040 Effectiveness of PPC's Internal Controls and Internal Audit process**

The councillors reviewed the current system of PPC's internal controls and internal audit and resolved that they were satisfied:

- With the Internal Control processes undertaken by the council
- With the review of the Internal Audit as per Appendix E
- That the scope of the audit is in accordance with The Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales, A Practitioners Guide 2011 and the guidelines issued by BDO LLP and by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- With the report provided by the internal auditor at the conclusion of audit for review by PPC.
- The councillors further resolved that Heelis & Lodge's scope of internal audit work was in accordance with the role required to be undertaken by the internal auditor for PPC.

#### **13/041 Future Agenda Items**

- AONB grants and BDC's Strategic Tenancy Policy.

#### **13/042 Next meeting**

The next scheduled PPC meeting will be held in Polstead Village Hall on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013 starting at 7.30pm.

**The meeting closed at 10.10pm.**

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### Appendix A County, District and Suffolk Constabulary reports

PCSO Julia Bignell gave the councillors the following report "There have been no reported crimes since your last meeting on the 17th January. However, there has been an increase in Dwelling Burglaries within Babergh the lasted being Whatfield Rd, Aldham Tye and Upper St, Upper Layham. They seem to enter via a rear window, using a jemmy or smashing the glass then once inside making a search for jewellery. Possible vehicle to look out for is Peugeot or Vauxhall silver/grey may have 3 or more males within the vehicle, these burglaries are being committed during the daytime."

Sue Wigglesworth (Babergh District councillor) gave the following Report "On 26<sup>th</sup> of this month Babergh's councillors will be voting on the 2013/14 budget based on a Council Tax freeze. Car parking in our two towns will remain as it is now but an on-going review continues with the hope that the cost of running and maintaining the car parks can be reduced. Car park management and re-surfacing, such as the work done recently in Sudbury, has to be recognised as a significant expense. The transformation programme, leading to the integration of Babergh and Mid-Suffolk's staff, is just coming to the end of a 90-day consultation period. Our staff are now preparing to apply for jobs....all jobs have been re-assessed. There have been a few voluntary redundancies and there will be a few job losses. If necessary, a few posts might have to be advertised externally but not until the internal interviews have been completed.

Both councils remain committed to trying to deliver new affordable homes. I'm afraid that current staffing uncertainties may have slowed things down a bit. However, it is very important for the Parish Councils to persevere. We are, at last, making some progress in East Bergholt but it has been an agonisingly slow process partly due to local problems, and partly due to complex agreements with everyone concerned. While on the subject of affordable housing we have, at Babergh, just revised the Local Connection Criteria. The changes make the criteria clearer and feature in the Affordable Housing e-newsletter which goes out to all Parishes."

### Appendix D RFO Report

#### Receipts & Payments

Date	Details	Ref	Power	Receipts	Payments
14/02/13	D Simpson - Plaques	642	LGA 1972 s 111	0.00	494.00

End of Appendices