

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Little Bealings held at Bealings Village Hall
on Monday, 6 March 2017 at 8.20pm**

Present: Mrs Toni Cornish, Dr Colin Hopkins, Ms Denise Head, Mr Douglas Hunter and Mrs Margaret Wilson (all Parish Councillors), Mr Robin Vickery (County Councillor), Mr Colin Hedgley (District Councillor), Reverend Celia Cook (Priest in Charge) and twelve residents/members of the public

In attendance: Mrs C Ramsden, Clerk to the Parish Council

Mrs Wilson, as Chairman of the Parish Council, took the chair and welcomed those present.

Apologies: Mr Barnaby Rufford and Mr Ian Ransome (Parish Councillors).

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 March 2016: The minutes were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

Matters Arising from the Minutes: None.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman introduced the Parish Councillors and Clerk and reported that there had been nine Council meetings, including three specifically to deal with planning applications. The Council had been consulted on a variety of planning applications, including a new office building, house extensions, and several for development at Sinks Pit.

During the year a visit had been made by the Environment Agency and Anglian Water concerning septic tank problems in The Street. A decision is awaited on a solution.

It is anticipated that the 20mph speed limit for part of The Street will proceed shortly, and having consulted with residents, the Council has suggested it should extend from the railway line level crossing to beyond the footpath exit to the Village Hall Playing Field. The Council is grateful to Mr Vickery and Mr Hedgley for allocating funding to the project.

The Council remains a member of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Community Action Suffolk, the Suffolk Preservation Society and SAVID (Safer Village Driving).

The Chairman thanked the Clerk and the Parish Councillors, Mrs Shaw for her work as webmaster and Mr Fear in his first year maintaining the footpaths and repairing sand boxes.

Other Reports

County Councillor's Report

Mr Vickery introduced himself as the new County Councillor for Carlford Ward, and said that he had become aware that highways issues were a major concern for the 26 rural parishes he represented. He had been pleased to allocate funding for Speed Indicator Devices (SID), including via SAVID, and was aware that the devices were useful in collecting data as well as advising motorists of their speed. SCC was now funding pole installation for SIDs. He anticipated that when works started for the East Anglian Offshore Windfarm cabling that he may need to deal with complaints.

His report also drew attention to the continued freeze in Council Tax, and that SCC had implemented the 3% National Adult Social Care Levy to fund the national living wage for carers. He advised that £10m of road surfacing work would take place to prevent future pothole problems, and that the number of existing potholes was decreasing. SCC was currently considering responses to its consultation on its Fire and Rescue Services. Suffolk had improved its educational ranking at GCSE level as a result of its 'Raising the Bar' initiative, now being ranked 55th out of 151 authorities. The Suffolk Better Broadband programme was progressing well. The Council had published the Suffolk Annual Public Health Report 2016.

In response to a question he advised that SCC officers could advise when Better Broadband would reach the village. It was noted that fibre broadband would be provided locally but not connected to properties by this programme.

In response to a question about the implementation of the 3% National Adult Social Care Levy, given that the Council had reserves of £198m, he responded that a part of the reserves was already allocated to meet an overspend in the Social Care budget for this year, and that other amounts were allocated for other projects, such as the new bridge at Lowestoft and the Ipswich Wet Dock Crossing, which were due to

completion around 2020. SCC needed to commit to funding these projects to enable it to draw government funding for them.

District Councillor's Report

Mr Hedgley introduced himself as one of three District Councillors who represented the Woodbridge Ward, which included the parishes of Hasketon, Great Bealings and Little Bealings. He was Chairman of SCDC's Licencing and Health Committee and a member of its Scrutiny, Audit and Governance and (as first reserve) Planning Committees. He represented SCDC on the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel and the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board. He was a founder member of SAVID, Denise Head being the Parish Council's representative. He was a member of the local Speedwatch Team and his written report included data Speedwatch had gathered.

Contributions from his Enabling Communities Budget during the year had included £2,500 for the 20mph speed limit in The Street.

He reported that SCDC had agreed an increase of 3% in Council Tax for the next year, due to the need to safeguard front line services. Government funding was projected to be further reduced and the Council needed to be more business-like to become financially self-sufficient. It was also looking at investing in improving leisure centres with works planned at Deben Leisure Centre and the Felixstowe Pier project. It was considering feedback to its consultation on Beach Hut charges.

Reverend Cook

The Reverend Cook thanked the Council for its invitation to present a report on behalf of the Church. It had been a busy and fruitful year and she was especially pleased that the Church had re-engaged with Bealings School. The School had held a Harvest Celebration and a play in the Church for the first time in 10 years. She was now a School governor and looked forward to working more with the School, including at the new community resource.

Roof and tower repairs had been completed and thanks were due to those who had donated. Hopefully the future of the Church building was secure but there was an annual loss of around £2,000 – which meant that the Church would close in five years. The PCC had no choice but to put the Angela Cobbold Hall up for sale and she hoped that the local community would support any local buyer who wished to secure its future through community funding.

The PCC was aware that there was no café, pub, post office or shop in any of the four villages. A Cafehub Committee had been formed, with relevant professional expertise to provide a flexible space within the Church. There would be a permanent space for worship and reflection and a professionally run café. It was intended to involve the school and other social groups and that the café revenue would secure the future of the Church and financially support the School, Village Hall and other local groups.

In response to questions, she advised that the Cafehub was at consultation stage and would need approval from a Diocesan Committee before proceeding. The Diocese was enthusiastic about the project and it was hoped the café would open in December.

She could not advise when bookings should no longer be taken for the Angela Cobbold Hall, but would be happy to respond directly to queries. The Hall was proposed to be auctioned in the Spring, if an auction took place then. The Hall had been given Non-Designated Heritage Asset status by SCDC as a result of pre-planning application enquiries made by an architect on behalf of the PCC. No planning permission had been applied for due to lack of resource. She was aware that SCDC had advised that use of the Hall needed to stay as at present and that taking down the extension could resolve the current subsistence problem. SCDC would not allow residential or B1 use (ie offices or light industrial). The PCC had not pursued planning permission any further as a result.

Ms Helen Clarkson, Caféhub Project

Ms Clarkson, as a member of the project committee, was happy to answer any questions. It was intended to start work in September, but there would be no renovation of the Church building itself. Works would be short term to preserve the space. They were being advised by volunteer heritage and architect consultants, including in respect of the business plan to ensure the Cafehub was run as an asset to the community.

Bealings Village Hall Trust Report:

Mrs Wilson, as Secretary of the Trust, reported that the Hall continued to be well used by regular hirers and for one-off bookings. Projects in the last year has included the refurbishment of the main hall floor, and

replacement of the toilet wash basin taps. Further improvements were planned when funds permitted. A new refrigerator and freezer had been purchased for hirers' use from fund raising.

An online booking and email enquiry system was being set up, linked to the parish website, and thanks were due to Jenny Shaw for her work on this.

Use of the Sports Court had decreased during the year, but it was hoped it would improve again this year. A bench had been installed in memory of Andrew Keep of Great Bealings by his family and friends.

The Trustees were grateful to the Great and Little Bealings Parish Councils for their annual donations to the upkeep of the Hall and Playing Field.

Any Other Business:

Sinks Pit: A resident raised the ongoing problem of pollution from works at Sinks Pit. The Chairman responded that the Council continued to press the County Council to resolve the matter. Mr Hunter advised that he was aware of a new approach from SCC in response to a resident's letter on the matter, which proposed that it would waive some of its usual planning and legal charges, if application was made by the owner of the site for bunding to be installed on SCC's land. It also urged the owner to undertake noise assessment testing to enable confirmation that new bunding would resolve the issue, although Mr Hunter had drawn SCC's attention to the fact that bunding was recognised elsewhere as effective.

Mr Vickery advised that he had recently attended a meeting with the SCC portfolio holder, Councillor Hicks and Mr Palfrey, the officer responsible for Waste Management at the adjoining SCC landfill site, and had visited the landfill site with them. He found that dust pollution that day was also a significant issue. He understood that a concern of Mr Palfrey was that agreement to raise the bund height by four metres could result in the noise becoming a problem for Kesgrave residents instead. An additional two metre bund was a possible solution, but the resident pointed out that this would not resolve light pollution from the site building. Mr Vickery understood that the owner of the site was amenable to carrying out the bunding work, if SCC would authorise it.

Ms Head reported that she and other Councillors had toured the site at the invitation of the owner and she was of the view that the owner did wish to resolve the issue, if SCC would agree to the bunding on its land. It was noted cancellation of a meeting of residents, the owner, SCC and Dr Poulter, MP, had been due to Dr Poulter being ill. A new date was awaited.

Angela Cobbold Memorial Hall

Ms Clarkson said that, as a non-voting member of the PCC, she would like to explain more about the PCC's decision to sell the Hall. The decision had been taken 17 years ago and, while it was not ideal, was the result of the Hall needing significant refurbishment. At one time there had been doubt that it was safe to continue using the Hall and it was in financial deficit annually. The PCC had no funds to improve it and pursue a change of use to B1, but was also aware that there was no alternative venue for the events held there. It therefore had no alternative but to sell and was looking to create the Cafehub as an alternative venue first.

A resident said that it was clear that there was demand for the Hall and asked why the PCC could not lead on obtaining B1 use to secure its future. The Reverend Cook confirmed that the PCC would pay for hire of the Village Hall, or other venue, for any group which was displaced if the Cafehub was not ready before the Hall was sold. Ms Clarkson confirmed that funds from the sale of the Hall would not be used to create the Cafehub. It was for a separate Angela Cobbold Hall group to secure funding for the Hall to continue to function; the PCC could not afford to support it.

A resident whose property adjoined the Hall asked if the community would buy the Hall, or support its future use. He was aware that it had significant structural problems and, if he should consider purchasing it to resolve his own and his neighbours' drainage and parking problems, he would like to know whether the Parish Council would then support its future use for the community. It was pointed out by another resident that he could approach the planning authority (SCDC) for advice on the likelihood of obtaining a change of use permission for the building but, in his view, it was a matter for a community solution. He did not favour either a new house or an office block on the site, but the building should be put to some use.

There were no other matters raised. The Chairman thanked those present for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.