

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Little Bealings Parish held at the Angela Cobbold Hall on Monday, 10 March 2008 at 7.00pm

Present: Mrs F Evans, Mr K Beaumont, Mr P Carr, Dr C Rowe, Mrs J Shaw, Miss D Williams, Mrs M Wilson (all Parish Councillors), Mr P Bellfield (Suffolk County Councillor) for part of the meeting, Mr T Baker and Mr R Bull (Woolpit Business Parks, owners of Grove Farm) for part of the meeting and thirty three parishioners/members of the public

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

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

Apologies: These were received from Mr I Jowers (Suffolk Coastal District Councillor), Rev P Stentiford (Priest in Charge), Bealings School and the Carpet Bowls Club.

Planning:

Views on Planning in the Parish:

Mrs Shaw explained that Suffolk had been allocated 56,000 new houses by central government and there was therefore a need to consider their location in the county. While SCDC did not propose any in the village, Ipswich Borough Council had identified 2,140 to be allocated within their policy area (which included Martlesham, Rushmere St Andrew and Kesgrave) and the village was defined as a 'local service centre' village. It was not, however, allocated any housing in the current consultation on the new Local Development Framework. Housing development would, therefore, continue to only be permitted within spaces in the defined village area. However, if a need for affordable housing was identified this could be given permission on an adjacent site.

The Council had not objected to SCDC's LDF proposals but was aware that empty farm buildings, such as those at Grove Farm, were likely to be the subject of applications for conversion to light industry and commercial use as a result. The developers of this site were present and would give their own presentation.

Mrs Shaw asked that parishioners present complete a short questionnaire on support for affordable housing, sheltered accommodation and any change to the boundary of the village. The Parish Plan survey would also address the affordable housing issue more comprehensively later in the year.

Presentation by Grove Farm Developer

Mr Baker explained that Woolpit Business Parks had bought the site in 2000 but it was redundant for agricultural use. They had hoped to obtain planning permission for a small scale housing development, but this had been refused as contrary to policy; the site was outside the defined village area. However, they considered that the replacement of the Local Plan with the LDF provided the opportunity for policy to change and they were therefore asking the Council and residents for their preference for the site. Possible options were bungalows for those who wished to downsize or affordable housing. They intended to develop a ribbon of buildings, retaining two ponds and woodland to the south. Part of the site was a flood risk area and they were aware of its high visibility from existing properties to the north and south.

The current application for B1 commercial and industrial use had been submitted following the withdrawal of a previous application for commercial and industrial units. The previous application had attracted objection from SCC on highways grounds and changes, including B1

use, were intended to address this. However, B1 use would create more traffic than housing – which was still their preferred option for the site.

Individual residents:

- expressed concern at the submission of a B1 use application if housing was preferred. The developer said that it would be some time before the Parish Plan established if there was a need for affordable housing, hence the current application. If permission was given for B1 use it did not have to be implemented.
- saw no advantage in the B1 use to the village and detriment in respect of traffic, light and noise pollution and damage to verges etc, and, if housing was preferred, requested that the developer withdraw the current application. The developer wanted to let the current application run as there was no certainty that affordable housing would be possible. Some development of the site was inevitable.
- were not convinced that affordable housing would be only available to local residents.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 5 March 2007 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

The Chairman confirmed that lack of funding by SCC for the pinch points on Martlesham/ Playford Road had delayed this work. It was not the case that there were any proposals to widen the road. Resurfacing of Martlesham Road was proposed for July and it was hoped that more effective rumble strips and white lining around substantial trees would follow. Safety issues restricted speed camera checks.

Reports:

Parish Council Chairman's Report:

The Chairman reported that Mrs M Wilson had been co-opted to the Council to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr M Dunnett after the elections in May. Mrs Shaw had been re-elected Vice Chairman and was leading on planning matters, an increasingly complex area. Miss Williams attended Police liaison meetings, Mr Carr attended Save Our Rural Roads group and she and Mr Carr attended Suffolk Association of Local Councils meetings. She also represented the Council on the Village Hall Management Committee. Mrs Cook continued as Footpath and Tree Warden, with Mr Ball undertaking maintenance work.

Meetings: There had been six scheduled meetings during the last year, plus three extra to consider planning applications.

Parish Plan: An open meeting for all residents of Little Bealings, Great Bealings and Playford in April had been followed by the formation of a Joint Parish Plan Steering Group, consisting of five members from each of the three parishes, to take forward work on parish planning.

Planning Applications: Most applications had been passed without objection or passed after amendment. A major application had been for the change of use for the Grove Farm buildings, with a refusal of planning permission for housing being followed by applications for commercial and industrial use.

Finance: Annual grants had totalled £707, with the grant to the Benefice Magazine being increased to £100 in view of its new free delivery to all households.

Highways: Funding for pinch points along Martlesham and Playford roads to slow down traffic is still awaited. There are on-going meetings with SCC, Suffolk Police and neighbouring parishes to improve traffic flow on A1214, including a trial to turn off traffic lights at the St

Michael's roundabout. A permissive field edge footpath provided by kind permission of the local farmer, Nigel Rolph, now links the playing field to Great Bealings and helps walkers avoid traffic. An opening will take place in May. The parish continues to belong to SCC's P3 scheme and maintenance work is carried out by George Ball.

Walks Leaflet: A Walks Leaflet with four local routes will be available in the spring.

Welcome Leaflet: This is produced for new residents and was available on request.

Suffolk Association of Local Councils: The Council continued to belong to SALC, a source of guidance on local governance and representatives attended area meetings.

Website: www.little-bealings.suffolk.gov.uk Jenny Shaw has continued as webmaster and the site contains information on the Council, Parish Plan, John Belstead Playing Field, bus timetables and a local history by Mr J Pawsey. More information is always welcome.

Christmas Card and Message: Councillors had delivered this to all households in the parish. The response had been favourable.

It had been a busy year and, with the development of the Parish Plan and changes in local government structure, this was expected to continue.

County Councillor's Report

The Chairman read out Mr Bellfield's report which covered:

- the adoption of a two tier school system
- the likelihood that Gt Blakenham would be the site for an incineration plant producing electricity
- that an increase of 7.3% in the grant to the Council by central government had resulted in a County Council Council Tax rise of 3.75%.
- the rejection of Ipswich Borough Council's bid for unitary status and the resulting boundary review for the county
- development at Debach Airfield
- the work of the County Council's Policy Development Panel on HGVs.

District Councillor's Report

The Chairman read out Mr Jowers's report which covered:

- his declaration of a prejudicial interest in the development of the Grove Farm site
- his wish for the Parish Plan to reflect the views of the residents, especially in relation to affordable and other housing development
- that nine of the eleven planning applications within the parish had been approved in the last year, with eight in line with the Parish Council's recommendation. The Council's views were listened to.
- an increase in the District Council element of the Council Tax of 3.9%

Joint Parish Plan Steering Group Report:

The Chairman read a report from the Secretary which explained the work of the Group since its first meeting in May 2007 as follows:

- No decision had been made on whether one or more Plans would be created for the parishes
- Chairmen (one per parish, rotating), Secretary, Treasurer and other officers had been elected and Terms of Reference agreed
- A budget had been agreed with the main funders, Suffolk ACRE
- Open meetings had been held to establish what the key issues for residents may be; a Parish Plan does not just address planning issues
- A survey will be distributed to all residents, with the aim of an 80% return
- Local stakeholders will also be consulted
- It was hoped to complete the Plan(s) in mid 2008

Phoenix Folk Dance Club Report:

The Chairman read a report from Mr Maslen. The Club had enjoyed the quality and cleanliness of the Village Hall dance floor. It had a membership of 28 and combined dancing with fund raising. Money had been sent to Romania, Peru and the East Anglian Children's Hospice.

Parochial Church Council Report:

Mrs Merry apologised for Revd Stentiford's absence due to illness. There was an active congregation of about 20 loyal worshippers. June Johnson had kindly donated new curtains and a donation from the John Belstead Trust had enabled the dry rot to be addressed and a social meeting point created in the Church. The Church was always open for quiet visits, events and on Sundays for services. The strong musical tradition continued. The refurbishment of the Angela Cobbold Memorial Hall was nearly complete, with thanks due to Peter and Vicky Carr for their work.

Funds had been raised for various charitable projects, including a Gambia project and Africa Action.

The work of the wardens, Geoff and Paddy Bills, was acknowledged. New wardens, Clive Rowe, Ann Tate and Mrs Merry, were now also available to visit parishioners and provide local support.

Mrs Merry had started a Mums and Tots Group in March 2007, which followed the Tiddlywinks programme of scripture study. The group had grown to over 25 members and involved older children in school holidays. It was hoped to involve the Group in Church services in future.

The Benefice Magazine Report:

Norman Porter explained that Geoff Bills, as Editor, undertook most of the work in producing the Magazine, while he was responsible for advertising. The Magazine was grateful to the three local Parish Councils and the Parochial Church Council for their financial support and to the volunteers who prepared, designed and delivered the Magazine. The only real cost was printing. For the first time the Magazine had been delivered free to every household in the parishes. It had a religious and secular content. It was hoped that Bealings School would contribute regularly, along with other local groups, to make it a main vehicle for improved local communication.

Annual expenditure had been £1,200. Advertising revenue and grants had resulted in a surplus which it was hoped to use to develop the Magazine further. There were no plans to change the format at present, but suggestions for development were welcome. The support of contributors and readers was appreciated.

Annual Plant Sale:

Norman Porter reported that the next sale would be on 26 April and, for the first time, would be held in and around the Village Hall. The sale was run by the Church, but had become a collective village activity and the change of venue provided the opportunity to promote the new Playing Field facilities. Innovations this year would include a WI stand, hopefully the involvement of the School and a sale of gardening books.

Women's Institute Report:

Mrs Moon reported that the WI had had a good year and had participated at many events, including the national AGM in the Royal Albert Hall. There were monthly meetings and Reading and Photography Groups. Two awards had been won at the Suffolk Show. Current

membership was 34 and new members were welcome. There were no plans to produce a calendar!

Bealings Bowls Club Report:

Mrs Sedgwick, the Secretary, thanked the Council for inviting the Club to attend. The President, Mr Jack Lilley and Club Captain, Eric Sedgwick, were also present. The club played in a number of leagues and competitions. They appreciated the nice green in such lovely surroundings, but were aware that many clubs had folded in recent years. New members of all ages, especially local residents, were welcome. The sport offered a cheap way to keep fit and meet new friends. It was hoped to open the green for the season on 19 April.

Wolsey Miniaturists' Club Report:

Peter Carr reported that the Club met monthly and had about 25 members. It was a social club and members helped each other making decorative miniature items. There was a Christmas party, summer BBQ and members visited exhibitions. New members were welcome.

Friends of John Belstead Playing Field Report:

Roger Roseboom reported that £150,000 had been raised to refurbish the Playing Field. Work on final landscaping and a boules area needed to be completed before the official opening on 5 May. An initial donation of £35,000 from the John Belstead Trust had opened the door to many other funding sources and all but one funding application had been successful. The rejection by the National Lottery, on the grounds that other projects were more in need of funding, was followed by a further donation of £20,000 from the John Belstead Trust to secure the project. The result had been the creation of one of the best small playing fields in Suffolk. There had been no direct request to either the Village Hall or local residents for funding for capital works, with social and other events raising funds. A direct appeal was now being made to meet ongoing running costs. There was only a low return to date and residents were urged to contact him about any concerns they had over the project.

Bealings Youth Action Theatre Group

Roger Roseboom reported that the Group had been formed in October 2007 and met on Saturday mornings in the Village Hall. The intention had been to provide an activity for young people during the winter months. There were about 30 members, aged 10 – 18. Suffolk ACRE had given a grant of £3,500 and new lighting had been purchased for the Hall. The Village Hall had contributed to a new sound system. The first production would be on 11 and 12 April and offered a selection of scenes from musicals.

Any Other Business: No matters were raised.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.