

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at Old Newton Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs J Miller (Chair), T Arnold, R Lawson, J Harbidge, K Goudy, M Reeve, M Clements, K Price (Clerk), District Cllr J Wilshaw, County Councillor A Stringer and 13 members of the public.

1. **Chairman's welcome to the meeting and to receive any apologies for absence.** Apologies received from Cllr M Shave and Cllr K Baker. Cllr Andrew Stringer will be late as he had an earlier meeting to attend but will aim to get here as soon as possible.

Chairman agreed to bring the planning forward to item 7 after the finance report.

2. **Dispensations:**

- a) To consider any requests for dispensations – None received
- b) To note existing dispensations. The standing dispensation for Cllr Clements in respect of the proposed development land between Silver Street and Finningham Road and Cllr Reeve in respect of the proposed development of the Greenacres Site.

3. **To receive any declarations of personal / prejudicial interest** – Cllr Mary Reeve declared an interest in respect of the Haughley application 17/05524 - bordering Mrs Reeves land.

4. **To approve the minutes of the November meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.** It was Proposed and seconded to approve the minutes and they were signed accordingly by the Chairman.

5. **Clerks Report**

- Crier submission was submitted for December edition.
- RTI submission was submitted for the month of November.
- Nest Pension submission was completed.
- All cheques for payment have been issued.
- All information, minutes and agenda have been uploaded onto the village website.
- The committees and working parties have been uploaded onto the village website.
- Planning responses were issued to MSDC by the deadline for comments.
- The FG&T had their AGM and charitable donations were kept the same at £25 cash to each qualifying resident. The Charity Commission audit report has been completed.
- The Clerk has written to Yew Tree Farm, thanking them for their work in making good any damage caused during their recent renovation and building works.
- Francesca – Clerks contact within SCC Footpaths has moved and there is no replacement for her as yet.
- There is an additional Planning application that has come in DC/17/05830 – Sandford Road with a deadline for comments of 22<sup>nd</sup> December. The Clerk has been given an extension to provide comments after our January meeting.
- The public consultation response was issued. The Chairman confirmed his attendance at the MSDC Planning meeting. Tom Barker from MSDC Planning feels that the planning department is doing well under difficult circumstances. He says that challenges are that staffing levels are low and there is a national shortage of planning officers. He did talk about the local plan and hopes this will be adopted early 2019. The Clerk submitted the Parish Council comments and Mr Barker is hopeful that there will be an opportunity to comment further along the consultation process.

**Police Report**

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>DETAIL OF INCIDENTS / CRIMES</b>
September 2017	1 x Violence and sexual offence on or near Cross Green 1 x Antisocial Behaviour on or near Knights Close 1 x Public Order on or near Church Road 1 x Theft on or near Greenacres
October 2017	Not available at time of print.

## 6. Financial matters & Financial report

The budget spreadsheet has been issued to all Cllrs for any additional comments and or amendments before setting the precept and finalising it at the January meeting.

Comments for inclusion in the budget and precept include Cllr Training and the cemetery as there is only 1 plot available at the current used cemetery site, plus an estimated 20 plots at the top end. Access will need to be required to the new part of the cemetery so funds will need to be available towards installing road access and a driveway and splay on to the highway. Cllr Arnold also wished to ask if there were any funds available for Village maintenance and the contingency fund. The clerk explained that these have been removed from the budget and allocated under ringfenced funds. This has been done to try and keep the precept as low as possible.

### Bank Account Balances:

- Barclays November Statement Balance **£24,962.73** (29/11/17)
- Scottish Widows 60 Day account balance = **£3,377.69** (01.10.17)
- Scottish Widows Deposit account = **£253.37** (01.10.17)

### Accounts for payment – November 2017:

- KAREN PRICE - Salary November includes holiday pay, expenses and less tax & NI and pension = **£871.49**
- HMRC – PAYE NI & Tax – Employee £15.03, Employer £17.28 = **£32.31**
- NEST Pension Contribution **DDR** – employee £6.44, employer £8.05 = **£14.49**
- Adam Alexander – Cemetery Maintenance Nov 11hrs: **£165.00**
- CGM – Grass Cutting 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> October - **£512.89**
- Ken Goudy – Remembrance Poppy Wreath **£20.00**

### Monies Received – November 2017:

- Nothing to report. There are some cemetery fees received and SCC grant money for the mini SID upgrade totalling £1,040.00 that have not been banked until December so will show at the next meeting.

Proposed and seconded to pay the accounts. All Cllr's present agreed. The cheques were signed accordingly.

## 7. MSDC Planning Applications Received

- **DC/17/05683 – Outline Planning Application (Access, Appearance, Layout and Scale to be considered) for the erection of two new dwellings on land adjacent Oak House, Church Road, Old Newton.** The Chairman closed the meeting to allow Mr Helliwell to speak to the council. This application was originally refused in May 2017 mainly due to eroding the intended isolated nature of both grade 2 listed properties. The cottages and the grange are isolated and cannot see why this has changed. The access off an unmade road once there are more than 5 properties, highways would insist that this road be made up and would require splay which there is currently none.

All of the properties possibly being put forward are for large family homes and will not support the need for smaller affordable housing in the village. It was felt that this was not an improvement on the original application. It was felt that the adverse impacts have been skated over and the adverse impacts would outweigh any benefits if this application was approved.

A Proposal was made to refuse on the same grounds as previously set by MSDC. The re-issue of the design has not addressed any of the issues originally raised and the new application appears to have made things worse. This was seconded. 5 for and 1 abstention. The application is refused by parish council by majority vote.

- **DC/17/05506 – Outline application of erection of detached dwelling and garage on land adjacent to Applewhite House, Finningham Road, Old Newton, Stowmarket.** Cllr Lawson has put forward his comments already to MSDC. There is some strong resident support for this application. The access was an issue previously and this has now been addressed. At one stage we would have been saying this is outside the settlement boundary, however the original statement for refusal was that it was isolated however it does have other properties around it and to be consistent with other similar applications the same inspectorate rulings should apply. The parish council could not see a reason to object to this application and it was proposed and seconded to approve with a unanimous vote.

- **1866/17 – Outline planning application with access, landscaping and layout to be considered for the erection of upto 56 dwellings with vehicular access from Finningham Road, Old Newton. Appearance and scale to be subject of a reserved matters application.**

The parish council accept that we have been given the opportunity to comment on the amended application. Cllrs felt that this is not identified as the preferred site for building in Old Newton and had nothing new to add. The parish council original objection to this application stands.

- **DC/17/05524 – Change of use of agricultural land and buildings to depot for civil engineering business (Sui Generis) at Old Bells Farm Wassicks Lane, Haughley, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3NP.** We have not been asked to consult on this. We have however received comments from a parishioner that was read out to the meeting. Cllr Reeve left the meeting. The route to Old Bells Farm is via a single track from Old Newton and although the property is in Haughley this change of use will have a larger impact on the parish of Old Newton. The proposed closure of many of the pedestrian network rail crossings will increase usage of this track from pedestrians without adding in increased access to and from a depot / business. the single-track road is not suitable for heavier usage. The road known as Silver Street to access Wassicks Lane is also narrow and single-track in many places. We are a rural community and the route is used by agricultural machinery, but this is seasonal. Infrastructure and suitability of the roads for heavier vehicles with no footpaths is a major concern. The application does not stipulate the type of vehicle access, but if we assume that the nature of the business will be large the infrastructure and damage to the road will have a massive impact on the community and residents. It was proposed and seconded to object to this application and carried by unanimous vote. Cllr Reeve was asked to re-join the meeting.
- **DC/17/05761 - Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered). Erection of two detached Dwellings on Land At Chapel Road, Old Newton, IP14 4PP.** Chairman closed the meeting to allow members of the public to speak. It was felt by parishioners that the elevation of the land will overlook the existing properties and have a negative visual impact. The scale and size of the proposed properties was felt to be a possible issue as this will have a potential impact on privacy. Access and egress is a pinch point on Chapel road and the recent drainage issues could lead to further drainage issues.

Access would be by vehicle as there is no provision for footpaths, It was felt that this is not a safe area and the impact on local residents who were in attendance was felt to be too high to offset against any benefits. It was raised that there has been access there for some time although it has been used as parking spaces.

Cllrs felt that although the plan shows a splay up onto the site, could this be made a larger splay to ensure safer access and egress from the site and ensure there is visibility up and down the road.

Cllr Clements Proposed to accept that the plot of land is suitable for two dwellings, however the access needs to be improved significantly. This proposal was not seconded. After some debate it was proposed by Cllr Harbidge, that although the parish council believe this is an acceptable plot to build two dwellings the parish council are not happy about them being two large five-bedroom dwellings and would prefer that any new properties are more in-keeping with the existing housing stock and the access would also need to be significantly improved. This was seconded, and the application was refused by majority vote. Four in favour one objection. One abstention.

- **DC/17/05765 - Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered). Erection of 5no dwellings and provision of extension to school car park on land At School Road, Old Newton, Suffolk.** A mix of three smaller homes and two larger ones and this development would also solve the parking issue currently experienced at the school as this is being offered as part of this development. Cllrs felt that the parking would need to be done as priority before the building of any new properties as building associated traffic would cause havoc on school pick up and drop off times.

Cllrs gave consideration for sustainable impact and there are obvious benefits. And all areas are met for the social and economic impact.

Proposed and seconded to agree with the development but would need the car park to be completed as phase one of the development and the car park once completed would also need to be available for use by the church. This was seconded and all Cllrs voted in favour of this application.

## 8. MSDC Planning Decisions Received

- **DC/17/04698** Householder Planning Application - Erection of detached annex (following demolition of existing outbuilding) at 118 – 120 Silver Street, Old Newton. MSDC Planning Permission has been granted

## 9. Correspondence Received & Circulars:

- Department of Transport – Application for the Network Rail Suffolk level crossing reduction order
- Scottish Widows – Changes to savings account conditions
- Letter written to Mr & Mrs Cadman – Ward Green
- SCC – Streetlighting Programme over the Christmas and New Year period – Agreed to keep in line with SCC and keep the lights on over Christmas Eve and New Years Eve.
- Smaller Authorities Audit – Notification of external auditor appointments 2017/ 2018
- Jo Churchill MP – Community Project Remembrance 2018.

Various circulars received for information purposes. File circulated during the meeting.

## 10. To receive District Councillor's Report – Miss Jill Wilshaw

In a move designed to support shoppers and traders in the build up to Christmas and to showcase all that the town has to offer, parking in all six car parks in Stowmarket will be free all day on Saturday 9 December 2017 for the Stowmarket Christmas Craft Fayre.

Mid Suffolk has unveiled proposals to change their **Council Tax Reduction Scheme** to reduce the burden of administration on residents accessing both the Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit schemes, treat customers' circumstances the same for both schemes and continue to support those customers most in need.

The changes also aim to make provision for the introduction of Universal Credit and align the current scheme with the Housing Benefit scheme that Mid Suffolk operates.

The current Council Tax Reduction Scheme – which replaced Council Tax Benefit in 2013 – includes a maximum discount of 95% for the least well-off residents, requiring just 5% of the bill to be paid. This discount will remain in place under the new proposals.

Over the last 4 years there have been a number of changes to Housing Benefit legislation, resulting in some residents seeing their circumstances being treated differently in application for support with Council Tax compared to Housing Benefit. The upcoming introduction of Universal Credit will also significantly change how residents receive financial support. **Universal Credit** introduction has been put back until April 2018 which coincides with the introduction of the Homelessness Act; preparations are going ahead with employing and training more staff.

Don't forget the **Locality Award** is still available. Please email Cllr Wilshaw for an application form.

## 11. To receive County Councillor's Report – Mr Andrew Stringer.

**2018-2019 Budget Proposals announced** - Suffolk County Council have released their budget proposals and savings plan for 2018-19. These were presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 23 November. Council Tax will be increased by 1.99%, following a seven-year freeze. This will be combined with a further 3% increase due to the Adult Social Care Precept, making a **total council tax increase of 4.99% for 2018-19**. SCC are forecasting a budget gap of £26.85m, and are offsetting this with a **savings plan totalling £23.9m**. This means that a further £3m will need to be spent from the Council's reserves in 2018-19. The savings from each directorate are outlined below.

**Adult and Community Services** - Savings will come from the Adult Care budget, with a proposed £11m reduction in spending on care purchasing and a £1m saving achieved by cutting the Sheltered Housing Grant. To achieve the £11m reduction in care purchasing spend, ACS have said that they will be managing demand for local authority provided care, promoting better integration between health and care systems in the County, and changing the way that care is provided. The Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group are particularly concerned by the loss of the Sheltered Housing Grant, which is used by sheltered housing providers to give low-level support to elderly residents, such as emergency alarm cords in their homes. Our representatives on the Scrutiny Committee queried whether this was a wise decision, and argued that this cut would reduce support for independent living and may increase demand for costly care in the future.

**Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services** - Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services are expected to make savings of £0.25m, in part through a systems transformation which will make better use of digital technology.

During Scrutiny, we questioned whether this was a realistic budget for Children's Services in 2018-19, given that they are facing an overspend of £6.4m against their 2017-18 budget.

**Fire and Public Safety** - Both Trading Standards and Citizens Advice will see a reduction in funding in 2018-19, in order to save £0.17m. The Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group are concerned that this decision is short-sighted. Trading Standards and Citizens Advice provide vital support to both residents and businesses in Suffolk, and both are facing additional pressures. The Council acknowledged that the return on investment in these services is high, and that there is a risk that reducing funding could cause increased demand in other areas of the Council.

**Resource Management** - Savings of £0.25m are due to be made through cuts to subsidised transport services and savings from community transport services. Reviews are currently being undertaken to determine which bus services will be reduced. Although Suffolk County Council has pledged to work with local Councillors, we are not convinced that Councillors and local people will be properly consulted over any changes.

**SCC current financial position** - Suffolk County Council is currently predicting a £10.2m overspend of its 2017-18 revenue budget. The majority of this overspend is in Adult & Community Services and Children's Services.

**Adult and Community Services** - By the end of the financial year, it is predicted that there will be a net overspend of £2.3m, against a budget of £229.5m. The main areas of budget pressure are:

- Care purchasing - £3.5m overspend
  - Area Social Work Teams - £0.9m overspend
- These will be offset by underspends totalling £2.1m in other areas of the directorate. This is being achieved by effective contract management and a slowdown in the use of the flexible dementia care service.

**Children's Services** - By the end of the financial year, it is predicted that there will be a net overspend of £6.4m, against a budget of £137.3m. The main areas of budget pressure are:

- Home to School Transport - £3.2m overspend
- Corporate Parenting - £4.6m overspend
- Specialist Social Care Teams - £1.1m overspend

**Home to School Transport – Cabinet to consider proposals for second time** - In September, our Group prevented Cabinet from moving forward with a consultation on changes to school transport policy, by calling the decision in to Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Committee agreed with us that the pre-consultation period had been inadequate and that it would be premature to begin a consultation. Since then, Suffolk County Council has run two workshops to engage with parents, schools and councillors. On 5 December, the Cabinet will once again be asked to approve the decision to go to consultation. Councillors in the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group have been working with schools and parents to come up with alternative solutions to the proposed changes, which would see over 3000 children lose their free school transport. We are not convinced that a change in policy would deliver the necessary savings, as has unfortunately been the case in Essex. If the Cabinet approves the decision, the consultation period will run from 12 December 2017 to 28 February 2018 and I will update you with details on how to participate.

**Cabinet Agrees to sell West Meadows site to current residents** - The Cabinet has agreed to sell the West Meadows Gypsy and Traveller site to current residents, who put forward a proposal to collectively buy the site. Whilst residents would own their individual plots, an entity would be formed to ensure collective ownership and management of shared spaces. Selling to the residents will ensure that there is minimal risk of displacement and guarantees that West Meadows will remain a Gypsy and Traveller site. Residents have given a commitment to retain ownership of their pitches for a minimum of 5 years, and have stated that they will not expect Suffolk County Council to undertake any further capital improvements to the site.

**40mph Speed limit B1113** – Cllr Stringer has at last had the estimate to complete the initial and detailed design, as well as completing the legal TRO with its associated consultations, and assuming a worst-case scenario of requiring the issue to go to rights of way committee because of possible objections is £5067.42. Cllr Stringer will have to juggle funds around to cover this, but will take Parish Council advice.

## 12. **Broadband Update – Cllr Arnold.**

Brown Street residents now have access to broadband that have ordered it, but the telephone lines are still having difficulties.

- 13. Village Noticeboards Update** - The noticeboards are not quite there yet but this is a work in progress. They are looking to change the latch fittings which will be done shortly. It is not cost effective to remove the noticeboards as the signage usually forms part of one piece of material and therefore would need to be re-made. The manufacturer has confirmed that it is possible to put the signage over the top of the noticeboards and the extra costs will be circa £39 for each of the larger noticeboards and an extra £15 for the smaller one. The smaller one is now ready for installation and should be done by the next meeting.
- 14. Cemetery Review & Maintenance & Cemetery Policy** - The proposed policy has been issued and amended by the committee and is submitted for approval and adoption if Cllrs are happy with the revised policy. Cllr Arnold suggested that the Extra 25 years mentioned within the policy should actually have a fee payable. Agreed by Cllrs for the extra 25 years to be a fee of £75.00. Point 11 and point 4 also to be revised to reflect that when a burial takes place **may** should be **is** for the exclusive right. Ashes (item 4) can only be buried in a full size grave plot once a burial has taken place. Clerk to re-issue the cemetery policy for the January meeting.
- 15. School Parking / Infrastructure / Road Signage** – The problems with safe and adequate parking in the vicinity of the Old Newton School, will be hugely reduced should planning application DC/17/05765 be approved. This will give pedestrians direct access to school premises, with no requirement to cross any roads. Cllr Baker is in the process of working with the Head of School to update the School Travel Plan, and has spoken with Councillor Stringer, who has agreed to work with Cllr Baker on this to ensure it meets all the necessary requirements.
- Cllr Harbidge has walked up the downs footpath and it is a lot better in places. Robert Hill has done a really good job at the top. Clerk asked to write to Mr Hill thanking him. If possible some material to be considered to make the surface much smoother would be advantageous however it would be needed to check with the land owner if this is something we could get permission for.
- 16. Highways / Speed Monitoring** – Nothing new to report, funding has now been received from SCC for the upgrade of our SID unit. The Cheque has been banked and will show on the December receipts. Cllr Clements to download the data from the SID to hopefully review at the January meeting.
- 17. Councillors Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council**
- Benches for the village. Agenda item for January. Locality award from Jill.
  - Footpaths sign opposite the Chapel. Didn't need replacing but it has.
  - Some of the potholes have been filled.
  - Footpath from Silver Street – knocked down on the midi track footpath. To be reported.
  - Cllr Baker has asked if we could please give Old Newton Under Fives Christmas Fair a plug. This is taking place between 6pm and 9pm at the Village Hall on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December.
  - Village Carol Service 7<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm.
- 18. Public Forum – Nothing.**
- 19. Additional Matters for inclusion on the agenda for the January 2018 meeting.**
- Budget / precept
  - Cemetery Policy
  - Benches for the village.
- 20. Date of the next Parish Council meeting** – The January Meeting will take place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018.

Please stay and enjoy the festive refreshments provided – Thank you and Merry Christmas everyone from the Chairman.

Meeting closed at 21.44hrs