

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Public Meeting commenced at 7.30pm at Old Newton Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs J Miller - Chair, N Hardman – Vice Chair,

M Helliwell, M Clements, A Tween, S Graells, S Hammond, K Hall-Price (Clerk & RFO) District Cllr J Pearson, District Cllr R Eburne, County Cllr A Stringer – arrived 20.06hrs, 2 members of the public.

1. **Welcome and to Receive and accept any apologies for absence.** Chair welcomed everyone to the March monthly meeting. Cllr K Baker and K Goudy have submitted their apologies for absence. Apologies were proposed, seconded and accepted. Clerk to send a card to Get Well Soon for Cllr Goudy following his recent accident and hospital treatment.
2. **To receive any declarations of personal/prejudicial interest & to note dispensations.**
  - To consider any requests for dispensations – No new requests received.
  - No existing requests to be recorded.
3. **To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024** – A couple of small amendments – Cllr Hardman was not present at the meeting, the word bridal should be bridle on the neighbouring parish liaison meeting on page 1037 and the items for inclusion on the agenda for the February meeting should have been March on page 1043. Once these corrections are made they can be signed. Agreed as true and accurate record. Minutes. Reminder for parish plan to be included on the next agenda. Clerk apologised as this has been missed. Proposed by Cllr Clements and seconded by Cllr Helliwell – All in favour.
4. **Clerks report following previous meeting (to be received as read – Cllr questions)**
  - The clerk issued in error the February crier submission for 2023 not the one written for 2024. Liza kindly spotted the error and refrained from printing anything out of date this month which is why the parish council entry in this month's crier is somewhat light. The Clerk has uploaded the entry onto the parish council website and will include anything in addition to this month that needs to be issued for the April entry. Sincerest apologies offered from the Clerk for this error.
  - The village website has been updated to include all minutes and information approved. Clerk has received a request via the community council whether we could include an area for the Crier to be uploaded onto. The Clerk has not been approached yet by the member of the crier committee, so this is not yet in process.
  - Cllr Stephen Hammond has been set up with a parish council email address and is hopefully able to access all emails and correspondence being issued. Cllr Hammond has also been notified as our new Cllr following co-option to the electoral and monitoring office at MSDC. He will need to ensure that all the ROI forms are completed.
  - Some Cllrs have had issues with their emails, and this was apparently due to the server needing to be updated. Information was circulated to those Cllrs affected please let the Clerk know if there are still some issues.

**Police Report** – (Crime map stats are always going to be circa 6 weeks out of date).

- November – 1 x Burglary on or near Silver Street
  - December – 2 x violence / sexual offences on or near Finningham Road
  - January – Nothing reported
5. **Financial matters & Financial report.**
    - February bank statement has been forwarded to Cllrs on the finance committee and our internal control Cllr.

**Bank Account Balances:**

- Barclays Statement Balance = **£17,942.99** (28.02.24)
- Scottish Widows 60 Day account balance = **£3,410.71** (31.12.23)
- Scottish Widows Deposit account = **£255.92** (31.12.23)
- Public Works Loan – Balance outstanding = **£7,666.93** (06.04.2023)

## Accounts for payment in arrears – February 2024:

EXPENDITURE	CHQ/B ACS/S O/ DDR		NET	VAT	TOTAL
Karen Price	Bacs	Salary February £966.16 holiday pay £116.62, less tax £6.80, less NI £3.48, less pension £43.32 plus expenses £40.50	£1,069.68		£1,069.68
HMRC PAYE	Bacs	Employee Tax £6.80, Employee NI £3.48 Employer NI £44.82	£55.10		£55.10
Nest Pension	DDR	Employee £43.32, Employer £32.49	£75.81		£75.81
Ian Hammond	Bacs	Cemetery Maintenance February Invoice – 2hrs	£30.00		£30.00
Westcotec	Bacs	Invoice 15654 – Assessment and carriage SID Unit	£100.00	£20.00	£120.00
Westcotec	Bacs	Invoice 15653 – 2 x battery	£126.00	£25.20	£151.20
ONEG/Onwoods	Bacs	Cleansing Grant Qtr 3)	£203.19		£203.19
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	Payslip				
East of England COOP	Bacs	<b>Cemetery fees received</b> Georgina Banbury £25.00 William Frost £75.00	£100.00		£100.00
ONEG/Onwoods	Bacs	Cleansing Grant Qtr 3)	£203.19		£203.19

Proposed by Cllr Tween and seconded by Cllr Graells – All Cllrs agreed. Clerk to put the February payments through this evening and Cllr Miller to approve on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

We do need to look at authorisation for payments for Parish Council payments. We need to look at another signatory for payments. Whoever takes on this role will need to be included as a member of the finance committee. Cllr Graells has offered to come onto the finance committee and take on the role of signatory.

### 6. Correspondence Received / Circulars

- School footpath correspondence received from District Cllrs at Feb meeting – How do we get this included on the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan. Does the Clerk need to submit or do anything?
- BMSDC Parish Services Survey – Surveys have been completed for both Old Newton with Dagworth & Gipping separately on behalf of the parish council.
- Call for Sites submission from Lesley Short. Artisan has submitted a plan for further development in the village. Land transferred to SCC for educational and residential of 75 dwellings. Access would be difficult from a private road. Joint local plan part 2 was a call for sites – We do not need to respond... Not appropriate at this time.

### 7. District Councillor's Report (to be received as read – Cllr questions).

**MSDC 2024/25 Budget** - The first Green Administration budget was agreed by Council in February. There will be a 2% increase in Council Tax for the MSDC portion. The cost of services to residents and communities is expected to rise by £1.8M, and Core Government funding is not matching the inflationary pressures, so the modest council tax increase should help protect services and build on the new priorities of the Council. The Green Administration is putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the heart of all its activities.

**Housing Revenue Budget** - The Housing Revenue Account budget was also agreed by Council in February. There are financial challenges ahead, most notably an increase of £1.1M in the cost to run the housing service. The housing revenue account and council general fund account are completely separate and under current legislation it is not possible for one to subsidise the other. There will be a 7.7% increase in housing rents this year just to keep pace with rising costs. There will also be increases in both service and utility charges for sheltered housing tenants. Many tenants receive housing benefit or universal credit and due to recent increases in the rent portion of this, the majority of tenants will not see an increase in rent. Advice and help for those struggling with finances is available from the Council.

**Rural Transport grants** - A new rural transport grants scheme has just been launched to help provide passenger transport options across the district. Existing community transport operators can apply for funding before 15th April. More details are available here: <https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/rural-transport-grants-scheme>.

**Joint local plan part 2** - All parish and town councils have been invited to complete a questionnaire about the services and facilities present in each area. This information is needed to prepare the next phase of the Joint Local Plan.

**Energy efficiency grants** - Funding is available to help residents with the cost of installing loft insulation, in partnership with Travis Perkins. There are four product options available and residents will receive a 50% discount on their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery.

More details can be found at the Green Suffolk website <https://www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/grants/>.

A free event about making older properties more energy efficient is to take place at The Hold in Ipswich on 6<sup>th</sup> March. More details available here: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/safe-suffolk-renters-retrofit-solutions-conference-march-2024>.

**Tree Cover** - SCC has secured over £200K from the Government's local authority Treescapes Fund for over 1500 new trees in a bid on behalf of all Suffolk councils, including MSDC. The funding will go toward planting as well as maintaining the trees.

**Sports facilities in Stowmarket** - In February the MSDC planning committee granted full planning permission for the first two parts of the Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project. The initial work includes an improved pitch for Stowmarket Rugby Club, active track, cricket nets and additional paths and fencing. The second package of work includes the construction of a new sports hall and sports pavilion. The third part, which was granted outline permission, focuses on the construction of the wellbeing hub and associated infrastructure.

Cllr Helliwell asked if the proposed increase was representative across the country – which it is.

#### **8. Keep Moat – Church Road Development**

We originally stated that we couldn't make the meeting scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup> and were offered online teams meeting that hasn't yet been confirmed. Clerk has chased Keepmoat. Residents that were in attendance at the last meeting and wished to discuss the proposed high fencing concerns at the back of their garden and flooding issues, have been copied in to Keepmoat. Given the current state of complaints being received a face to face meeting at the earliest opportunity has been requested. There is more than one residence that is now affected and incurring costs due to the flooding that is being caused by the development. Keepmoat have requested a daytime meeting if possible to ensure a full contingent of Keepmoat representatives in attendance. We could look at it being later in the day. Earliest would be 4.30pm needs to be as soon as possible. The developer is responsible for the ditch and this is not helpful with the levels of water around.

Cllrs feel that the flooding is a major issue across the bungalows... Enforcement at BMSDC to be informed immediately and every time comments are received to the Clerk. A meeting should be arranged sooner rather than later as a matter of urgency. It has also been reported that works are starting before 8am. 7.30am most days are confirmed start to works on site. Cllr Pearson would like to attend any future meetings arranged.

#### **9. Planning Applications**

**DC/24/00865** Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a Proposed: Erection, Extension or Alteration of a building for Agricultural or Forestry Use. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 6 - Erection of free standing portal frame with roof to intercept rain water. No adverse comments received so no comments were submitted to MSDC.

#### **10. Planning Decisions – None received at time of meeting**

#### **11. Cemetery**

- **Trees / Fallen branches** - Cllr Tween / Chair to provide update. Fallen branches some of them have been dealt with some will have to wait until the water has dispersed.
- **Graves and what is on the graves** – Some of them have lights on. This is not against the rules. The policy regarding the surrounds on the baby graves was amended to include a small surround if requested.
- **Old Cemetery management of brambles and overgrowth** - Ian our Cemetery Caretaker reported last month that he is not in a position to assist with the clearing of the overgrown areas of the old cemetery we have previously assisted the church with. Clerk has approached two contacts for quotes. Only 1 quote is back so far so the Clerk will chase this for the April meeting so that Cllrs have a comparison for discussion.

## 12. **County Councillor's Report – (to be received as read – Cllr questions)**

**Council Budget for 2024-25** - At Council on 15 February, Suffolk councillors met to discuss and vote on the administration's budget proposals. The council is borrowing heavily from its reserves to meet the growing demand for social care for adults and children, and council tax is due to rise by £74 annually for Band D properties from April this year. There will also be cuts to Family Hubs (children's centres) and Housing Related Support, which supports vulnerable people like care leavers to find accommodation. Funding for arts and museums will be maintained for 2024-25 but not from SCC core funding, and subject to a bidding process for grants from April 2025. The Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft local archives will be moved to The Hold in Ipswich, which like the arts funding changes has been controversial. My group were concerned about the lack of core funding from Suffolk County Council to arts and museums, as this is how they can secure funding from other sources, and we proposed an amendment to this effect. We also suggested that some of the council's remaining Covid funding from the government be used to support young people not in education, employment or training, as this cohort had suffered a lot of upheaval in their final years of schooling and exams. Support for young people not in education, employment and training is one of the services that is due to be cut in the administration's budget plans. Our amendment was declined by the Conservatives, as was the Labour amendment which also proposed to reverse some of the planned cuts.

**Autism Strategy for Suffolk** - At the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board on 18 January, the first draft of a Suffolk autism strategy was discussed, which will increase awareness and support for autistic people and make sure local services are accessible and meeting their needs. The plans include supporting autistic people to look for work and those who are considering self-employment, tackling health and care inequalities, improving access to education and transition into higher education. The strategy was commissioned by Suffolk County Council and local NHS providers and has been developed in co-production with Suffolk people with autism to reflect their views and experiences.

**Sizewell C Construction Begins** - Construction begins this month of the controversial new power station at Sizewell, a project that is forecast to take 17 years to complete. This will have a massive impact on local communities, the coastal environment and transport routes in the county. Suffolk County Council has secured £250m in mitigation monies for Suffolk communities, but this will still create a lot of upheaval in the county and the council has a role to play in making sure Sizewell C make every effort to minimise its impact and listens to the concerns of residents and local businesses.

**New Funding to Combat Serious Violence** - Suffolk's Safer Stronger Communities Board has announced a fund of £150,000 from the Home Office to support Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy. Organisations can bid for funding for specific projects which support the work of Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy, with allocation of funding managed through Suffolk Community Foundation. The Serious Violence Strategy focuses on young people and communities at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and the funding for projects is available to charities, voluntary sector organizations, social enterprises, parish councils, educational settings and other public bodies from April 2024. Applications are invited for grants between £4,000 and £15,000 and organisations can apply by visiting: <https://www.suffolkecf.org.uk/grants/seriousviolencedutyfund/>

**Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection Report** - As you may have read in the local press, Ofsted and CQC published their joint report into SEND services in Suffolk at the beginning of the month. The report was scathing about the county's SEND provision and detailed the failures of the council to communicate and work with parents and carers, improve the EHCP and annual review processes and waiting times, improve outcomes and reduce exclusions. My group was disappointed and concerned that the services are yet to get to grips with improving a service that has now received a third poor inspection result in a row and we offered our assistance to the Local Area Partnership (Suffolk County Council and NHS teams) in preparing the Priority Action Plan they now need to submit to Ofsted and CQC by 7 March.

The poor report led to the resignation of the Cabinet members for SEND, Education and Children's Services and prompted a reshuffle of the political leadership at the council. This report will be devastating for parents of children with special needs in Suffolk, and the council will need to work hard to make improvements quickly and build back trust.

**'Good Journey' Scheme for Visitor Attractions** - Visitor attractions in Suffolk are invited to sign up for a new scheme promoting car-free days out in the county. Suffolk Growth Partnership and Suffolk County Council have teamed up with national organisation 'Good Journey' to create the scheme, which launches in March. Around 25 local tourism and visitor attractions are invited to join the Suffolk Good Journey scheme offering residents and visitors discounts and incentives to leave the car at home and explore more of the county on foot, by bike or using

public transport. Participating attractions will be supported and will feature on [goodjourney.org.uk](http://goodjourney.org.uk) which provides travel information and discounts to domestic and international visitors and there will be a marketing campaign to promote it. Visitor attractions and venues interested in joining Suffolk Good Journey can find out more details by contacting Loretta Jones at Good Journey on [loretta@goodjourney.org.uk](mailto:loretta@goodjourney.org.uk) or [info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk](mailto:info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk)

**Blue Badge Team - Change of Telephone Number** - As a direct result of customer feedback, the Blue Badge phone number will be changing, and there will now be a dedicated phone line for Blue Badge customers. From **31 January** the Blue Badge team will be answering enquires on **03456 066 077**, this number will be visible online across the SCC Website, InfoLink and any future published materials. This is a change from the current telephone number, which is 0808 800 4005.

For more information about how you can apply for a blue badge or assist someone to make an application, please visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/blue-badge-scheme>

**Flood Resilience** - Those whose homes or businesses were flooded by Storm Babet and have not yet applied for the initial £500 flood recovery grant payment should do so as soon as possible as this is the first step in applying for the further £5,000 for flood protection from the government's Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant. The application process for the latter will begin in early 2024 and after initial eligibility checks by SCC, property owners will be responsible for sourcing an independent surveyor and PFR contractor. Payment of up to £5,000 including VAT will be paid retrospectively to the property owner once the Council receives proof of the completed installation and invoicing for the approved measures.

Further information about the grant eligibility, conditions and the forthcoming application process can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/property-flood-resilience-grant>

For more information about the flood investigations which are due to take place in the wake of Storm Babet, please see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/storm-babet>

Cllrs – Cllr Miller raised the issue at Wassicks Lane – The kerb is now over a meter away from the edge of the road and the road is breaking up. Cllr Stringer asked for the Chair to forward the pictures to Cllr Stringer. The vehicles using when clearing the beet off that field – their vehicles were huge and need to take some of the responsibility. Cllr Stringer re-iterated that the landowners are responsible for re-instating the road / verge. By not maintaining the verge this has caused the road to collapse.

13. **Allotments – Committee Update regarding updated tenancy agreement / Management contract with ONGAA / Parish Council** - Regarding the renewal of the lease on the Scarff land – A meeting took place on 4th January with the Landowners (Scarff Family) and the Clerk. The Renewal contract has been agreed to be issued but with Cllr Goudy being out of action and being part of the family that is needed to sign off the agreement has meant a delay in authorisation. Clerk to address this coming month and issue to ONGAA once all signed. The Management Plan has been issued to Cllrs for comment with a view to this being issued at the same time as the signed and completed lease agreement.

14. **SID Unit – Cllrs Helliwell / Tween.** The SID unit has been re-calibrated and serviced and two new batteries purchased – Invoices submitted for payment tonight. Thanks to Cllr Tween and Cllr Helliwell for sorting it and it should be returned this week. It has been serviced and the memory had gone but is now repaired it should last for a further 5-6 years. Well done for the work undertaken on this – excellent work from both Cllrs Tween and Helliwell.

15. **Cllrs matters to be brought to the council.**

- Cllr Tween – Informed by parishioner that the hundred lane footpath to the railway line has a significant amount of black flowing through the water – This has been reported.
- Cllr Hammond – The ditch has been dug out at the bottom of Station Road and this has made a big difference and is very noticeable.
- Cllr Helliwell – Footpath – thanks in advance the village hall have approved the new larger sign. As for the previous suggestion of identifying where the Dog bins are it was suggested to put some stickers or similar markings on the display map at the village hall.
- Water markers – pieces of wood. Clerk to speak to Cllr Baker regarding possibility of obtaining some wooden posts that could be used for the suggested water markers for deployment during the high water / flooding areas in the parish.
- Highways – Clerk asked to send the report from the system to Cllr Stringer regarding the Brown Street Directional post that needs replacing.

**16. Public Forum** – Nothing – Members of the public had left by the end of the meeting.

**17. Additional Matters for inclusion on the agenda for the April 2024 meeting.**

- Water Markers.
- Keepmoat
- Allotments
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Cemetery

**18. Date of the next meeting – Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.**

**Meeting closed at 20.50 hrs.**