

## THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 4 MARCH 2021 AT 8PM

*This meeting was held remotely by Zoom*

Present: Cllrs Louisa Pepper, John Squirrell, Jules O'Brien, John Gagen, Ashley Simpson and Keith Lee, together with the Clerk, Nicola Smith and the District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay. No members of the public were present.

1. Apologies for absence:
  - i. Cllr Gary Russell sent his apologies to the meeting, due to unforeseen events that afternoon he was unable to attend the meeting;
  - ii. Cllrs all consented to the apology.
2. Members' Declaration of Interest:
  - i. Cllr Keith Lee declared an interest in any matters discussed regarding Folly Farm Barn at this meeting (under matters arising);
  - ii. No declarations of gifts of hospitality;
  - iii. No requests for dispensation.
3. Minutes: Cllrs considered the draft Minutes of the meeting on 25 January 2021 which were duly approved.
4. Matters arising:

Planning Appeal: Plum Tree Barn, Bury Road – the planning inspectorate under appeal reference APP/D3505/D/20/3259204 granted a new permission with the dispute condition varied to allow the scheme to be undertaken in accordance with the changes proposed to include solar panels on the roof of the building.

Missing postbox (Bury Road, near BT phonebox) Royal Mail Case Ref: 201013-003572 and James Cartlidge MP ref: JC28483. As agreed at the PC meeting on 25 January 2021, the Clerk wrote to both James Cartlidge MP and District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay requesting their support in (a) getting a response to emails from Royal Mail, and (b) getting a replacement postbox. Both have written to Royal Mail and we are awaiting a response.

*At the meeting Cllrs discussed a second post box that is "missing" in the village (near Lavenham Road and Perrydown Lane). It is believed that the post the postbox sits on was hit by a vehicle and that the post box was therefore at an angle and Royal Mail removed it. Cllrs agreed to first report the matter to Royal Mail via the customer service email facility in order to get a case reference number and hopefully a swift conclusion, but if not they would then revert to course of action for the other post box and ask for assistance from District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay and James Cartlidge MP*

Planning Matter: Folly Farm Barn – no further update. Awaiting to see whether a “noise assessment report” is produced by the Applicant, and if so the terms of that report.

Planning Matter DC/20/04096 – Land opposite Wheelwrights. No decision yet from the planning department on this re-consultation.

5. District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay’s report:

**U and C Roads through Thorpe Morieux** – see Agenda item 12 for the information provided by Cllr Lindsay.

**Postbox replacement**

I have written to the CEO who was newly appointed in January after the last one departed unexpectedly, to urge him to give you a response.

**Suffolk County Council Budget**

The Suffolk County Council Budget was voted through Full Council on February 11<sup>th</sup>. This year’s budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which is usually offered. Key points include:

- A council tax rise of 4% (2% basic council tax and 2% Social Care Precept), representing an increase of £53.33 for a Band D property.
- A council tax income forecast to be £7.9m lower than usual, to be met by using reserves.
- Planned spending is £597.9m, 7.4% more than 2020-21.
- £15.3m of spending to address ongoing COVID-19 costs.
- No proposed reductions in council services or personnel.

**Green Budget Amendment voted down**

My political group submitted an amendment to the administration’s budget. This would have authorised the use of the full 3% social care precept to avoid impacting SCC’s reserves and generate an extra £3.45m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household. The extra income would have provided funding for wider services, including a new officer for the flooding team to unlock more government funding, and the re-enablement of concessionary bus passes on community transport. The amendment was not passed.

**Up to 10 year delay to flood repairs**

It has emerged from a report to the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny subcommittee on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, that funding restrictions meant it would take highways ten years to repair all the highways flooding issues currently on its list.

Meanwhile, the County Council has been told it will receive £27m from Government for highways repairs, maintenance and drainage in 2021-22, a reduction from £31m the previous year. This has necessitated the use of £2m of reserves to top up the grant. In the past settlements have been agreed several years ahead but the government is currently deciding year by year. This makes it impossible to plan long-term for road maintenance and repair.

### **Suffolk & Norfolk County Council submit joint bid for £6m flood funding**

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils have submitted a joint bid for £6m from a Flood and Coastal Resilience fund, to invest in flood protection schemes across both counties. The proposed projects would also capture water for reuse. If the bid is successful town and parish councils will be encouraged to get involved through measures like permeable paving, water butts and 'rain gardens' that can cope with occasional flooding and these projects would be in place by 2027.

### **Suffolk moves school bus contracts from Norse to Vertas**

The County's school buses have been run since 2013 by Suffolk Norse, a joint venture in which Suffolk has a 20% stake. However, Suffolk Norse went into losses in the last two years and has handed notice in on the contract. Suffolk cabinet decided on 23 February to move the contract in-house by handling it to its wholly owned company Vertas.

The 40 home-to-school transport routes and a school swimming service will be delivered by Vertas from September onwards. The move does mean the county can look at replacing diesel with electric vehicles as the technology becomes viable, to help meet its zero carbon by 2030 commitment.

### **Babergh – car parking charges Hadleigh and Sudbury**

Babergh Cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> February resolved to approve car park charges in Hadleigh and Sudbury. The first hour will be free and three hours will be £3 in Sudbury and £2 in Hadleigh. Charges will begin no earlier than 1<sup>st</sup> October. This date will remain under review dependent on the pandemic and the economy.

### **Babergh budget approved, Green amendment voted down**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> the council voted for its budget. Council tax will rise by 3%, the equivalent of less than 10p a week (£5 per year) for an average Band D property. The increase funds a package of measures that the council feel will meet the medium-term financial challenges presented by the pandemic; help meet its ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030; and maintain services for residents and communities.

I seconded my colleague Leigh Jamieson's amendment to the budget which tried to allow extra staff and funding for planning, increase planning committee training and

to encourage community projects. We were also looking to initiate further green measures to protect biodiversity and kickstart climate change improvements. We also proposed that the council set aside £2m from its “transformation reserve” for retrofitting its council homes. All amendments were voted down.

### **Babergh Council leader keeps his job after winning no confidence vote by 20 votes to 10**

At the February Council meeting a motion of no confidence was submitted by councillors representing Sudbury calling for John Ward to resign as Leader. John Ward has led on the proposed Babergh name change, the closure of Babergh’s customer access point in Sudbury, the failed sale of Belle Vue to Premier Inn and the instigation of car park charges. The cabinet system Babergh introduced in 2017 means he can do this without any consultation with the public or Councillors.

6. Public Forum: no members of the public present.
7. Correspondence: (all correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting)
  - (i) Email from villager regarding flooding at The Stone, junction off Bury Road (Clerk had liaised with County Cllr Robert Lindsay who had been in contact with villager and matter has been resolved);
  - (ii) Email from Anglian Water dated 18 February 2021 regarding “strategic water pipeline programme – route planning in your area”. Contents advising of potential for works. Noted. Agreed will await any further more specific information from AW;
  - (iii) Email regarding stile. Matter had been resolved in email correspondence;
  - (iv) Email regarding a NALC consultation on the planning model design code. Noted. Will await and see if any further more relevant information to the village transpires.
8. Clerk’s report:
  - (i) Schedule of items awaiting payment: Cllrs approved the following payments.
 

Jessica Allen (grass cutting)	300.00	chq404 LGA 1972
N Smith (Clerks salary)	156.80	chq 405 LGA 1972

(ii) Schedule of Income and Expenditure for the period 01/04/20 to 31/03/21

INCOME

Precept (1 of 2 payments)	1727.50
Precept (2 of 2 payments)	1727.50
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	3455.00

EXPENDITURE

PC Insurance	350.52
Audit	48.00
SALC annual subscription	141.67
N Smith (clerk salary)	842.80
HMRC tax and NI	74.20
Thorpe Morieux PCC (grass cutting)	200.00
Thorpe Times (grant)	100.00
David Barrett (webhosting)	92.00
Jessie Allen (Grass Cutting)	300.00
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	2149.19

9. Consider and approve 2021/22 meeting dates:

The following dates were approved:

- 1 April 2021 (Annual Parish Meeting)
- 6 May 2021 (Annual Parish Council Meeting)
- 1 July 2021
- 2 September 2021
- 4 November 2021
- 6 January 2022
- 3 March 2022
- 7 April 2022 (Annual Parish Meeting)

10. Broadband:

Cllr Russell was awaiting an update from Broadband. Will update at next full scheduled PC Meeting, if possible.

11. Speed Indicator Device:

Following lengthy discussion Cllrs decided that they would like to be led by what the majority of parishioners wanted in relation to a SID. It would mean additional “street furniture” that there were unsure would be appropriate and indeed have the effect of reducing speeding vehicles, but appreciated that this matter was raised with the PC via the discussions regarding the Quiet Lane Scheme. Cllr O’Brien agreed to put an article into the TT asking for peoples opinion and will discuss at next scheduled PC meeting.

12. Green Road and Bury Road

Parish Council had previously enquired as to whether there could be a changing of road classification so that Bury Road and not Green Lane is the designated main road through the village. It was noted that the SCC Highways Officer has stated that the classification needed a review in any event regardless of the enquiry from the Parish Council, and that we would be updated in due course.

13. Whitethorn Ley update

The houses have been allocated.

Cllr Squirrell liaised with Orwell Housing and the contractors to ensure that the ground that the contractors had used to park vehicles etc during construction had been returned to part of the wildflower meadow, and also the fence had been replaced.

14. Cllrs reports:

Cllr Squirrell reported data from the Suffolk Police website as follows:

0 - crimes in the village for December 2020 and January 2021;

9 – crimes in the 12 months up to end of January 2021, but it was noted that the stolen postbox had not been reported as a crime by Royal Mail.

Cllr Squirrell reported that it would seem that an ecologist from SCC had surveyed some of the verges in the village last Summer and she found a “good population of a number of priority species” and was concerned enough to prepare a report. That report had been presented to the County Wildlife Site Panel and it was agreed by the panel that an area of Green Lane should be formally designated as a Roadside Nature Reserve (RNR). These designations are quite rare in recent years, on grounds of cost, and the area designated will mean that Thorpe Morieux will have one of the larger RNR’s in Suffolk, and one of the few that will include both verges. The area

has been designated principally for flora but will have enormous potential for insects as well, as it is protected from chemical drift on both sides by thick hedges.

The principal management considerations are:-

Planned mowing date will move from June, to a September cut done by the County Council with a sympathetic machine (the natural height of the species on this verge is not high and hopefully visibility for traffic will not be impaired by the later mowing).

Hedges can be cut by the landowner, just as at present (with the intention of maintaining the width of the verges).

Wooden marker posts will be placed at either end of the reserve by the County Council.

The new management regime should be in place for this coming Spring/Summer.

Cllr Squirrell confirmed that there was no cost to the PC. He would prepare an article for the TT for parishioners to read about the RNR. The RNRs would be on a straight stretch of road so that there were less issues with visibility on bends in the road when driving. Cllr Squirrell also advised that he would be prepared to offer to become a warden for the RNR site.

Finally, Cllrs acknowledged the help from Strutt & Parkers with snow clearing in the village, and asked the Clerk to write to them thanking them for their help.

15. Planning:

- (i) Application DC/21/01143 – Apple Mount Farmhouse, Apple Mount Farm, Lavenham Road, Thorpe Morieux. Full planning application – change of use of land and siting 1No moveable tipi within site for use pursuant to wellness retreat.

Cllrs discussed the matter. In short, the Applicants architect and BDC planning officer had advised that planning permission was not required but the applicants had decided to do it this way as they would rather know if any objections, and work with villagers.

Parish Cllrs agreed no objections it was in effect a temporary structure.

16. Date of next meeting: 1 April 2021 at 8pm (to be held remotely by Zoom).

Meeting closed: 9.11pm