

# **CHEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015 in the Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllr J Melero (Chairman), Cllr F Betts, Cllr A McCormack, Cllr C Thurston, Cllr N Melero and Mr C Lewis (Clerk/RFO). Borough Councillor Angela Rushen also attended.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Doyle and C Cllr Terry Clements. Two members of the public, Mr A Job and Mr W Down also attended. (see item 9 below)

## **2. Declarations of Interest.**

There were no declarations.

## **3. Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014: -**

These were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

## **4. Matters arising.**

Item9a: Church Road/Farrows Close-road defect - now repaired.

## **5. Chairman's Report**

"*Making Local Democracy Better*" - Cllr J Melero informed councillors that this project had been set up by the Borough Council with the aim of helping people to become more engaged in local affairs. Amongst other things, it would look at the impact of Vision 2021, the number of councillors needed and the relevance of parish boundaries. The views of parish councillors were welcome. In addition Suffolk County Council had issued further guidance to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies tasked to deal with flooding. Both documents would be placed on the correspondence file for members' perusal.

## **6. Borough Councillors Report**

B Cllr Rushen's report for December had previously been circulated. In response to a question about traveller's sites, Cllr Rushen commented that the issues affecting the traveller family parked temporarily at Compiagne Way had been complicated by the refusal of planning permission. However, the Borough Council had authorised the travellers to use this site on a temporary basis, providing the site was maintained in good order and the number of vehicles was limited. The travellers had also agreed to pay for waste collection and other services. In other developments, Cllr Rushen's Localities Fund allocation had now been fully committed.

## **7. County Councillors Report**

No written report had been received. However, Cllr Clements had indicated in a telephone message that a VAS (flashing speed sign) was now available if required. It was agreed this should be discussed under item 11.

## **8. Police Report**

There was no police presence at the meeting and no written report had been submitted.

## **9. Vacancies for Parish Councillors**

Two parishioners, Mr Alan Job and Mr Bill Down, had both expressed an interest in becoming parish councillors and following a short discussion about the role etc., both candidates re-affirmed that they wished to join the Council. As it was necessary for the entire Council to stand for re-election on 7<sup>th</sup> May, it was suggested that nomination arrangements for the two candidates be dealt with as part of this process. This was agreed.

## 10. Parish Councillors' report

- (a) Repairs to pavement Church Road (Cllr Doyle)
- (b) Poor performing street lamps (Cllr Doyle)
- (c) Fire hydrants (Cllr Doyle)

There was no discussion of the above items as Cllr Doyle was not present.

- (d) Neighbourhood Watch Signs Church Road/Farrows Close - Cllr Betts reported that the Council's request for signs had been approved and that they should be erected within the next 5-6 weeks. On this occasion the costs could be fully grant funded, with no contribution being required from the Council.
- (e) Vacancy posters – Cllr Betts had developed a number of parish councillor vacancy posters, each related to a different target group. It was agreed that an electronic copy of the posters should be forwarded to the Clerk in readiness for future use.

*Action Cllr Betts.*

## 11. Clerk's report

- (a) Vehicle Activated Speed Signs – it was confirmed that the Parish Council's bid for a share of a VAS sign, purchased through C Cllr Clements Locality Fund, had been approved by an SCC Highways engineer. However, it was noted that responsibilities for the setting up and taking down of the signs would rest with the parish. Some councillors felt they needed more information about what was involved before committing to these tasks. It was agreed that the Clerk would try to establish contacts with other parishes with experience of VAS, to whom concerned councillors could refer. *Action: Clerk*
- (b) SALC St Edmundsbury Area Meetings 2015 these were confirmed as being 17 March; 16 June; 15 September and 8 December. All meetings would take place at Genesis Housing Association, 8 Elseys Yard, Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds. All meetings would commence at 7.00pm.
- (c) Successor to Quality Council Scheme – the new scheme, now known as "The Local Council Award" scheme was launched in January. Under the scheme, parish and town councils can achieve awards on 3 levels. The Foundation level appeared well suited to the smaller parish councils whilst the higher Quality and Quality Gold awards seemed to have been developed for larger authorities with significant staff responsibilities, and precepts. Although not seen as a priority, councillors agreed that it would be sensible to try and align its procedures with the criteria at foundation level. It was noted that a fundamental requirement of the scheme would be to publish Council information on-line. In this regard, it might be possible to publish information through the One Suffolk website. Cllr Betts agreed to provide contact details for One Suffolk's webmaster in order to facilitate further enquiries. *Action: Cllr Betts and the Clerk*
- (d) Parish Elections -7 May 2015 - The Clerk confirmed that he expected Nomination Forms together with all supporting information to be issued within the next few days. Cllrs J and N Melero offered to distribute the forms; co-ordinate their return and deposit them at the Borough Council, within their deadline.
- (e) Workplace Pensions - the Clerk confirmed that he did not wish to "opt in" to the pension arrangement but reminded councillors that they would need to be mindful of this employee "right" either when recruiting a new Clerk, or if taking on an additional employee.

## 12. Planning cases

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting two applications seeking planning consents, had been referred to the Parish Council for consideration. These were:-

- **Thatched Cottage, Church Road** –re-construct conservatory following part demolition and associated internal and external works
- **23 New Road** - single storey extension and provision of rear dormer, conversion of roof space to additional living accommodation and associated works.

In order to be able to respond to the Planning Authority within their deadline both referrals were dealt with through written procedures. *There were no objections to either application.*

### 13. Little Tea Pots Play group – possible grant to assist whiteboard purchase

Cllr Betts advised that a grant of £400 had been awarded from B Cllr Rushen's Locality Fund to help with the purchase of an "interactive whiteboard." It was understood this had now been acquired but in order to improve the IT interface, the Play Group needed to purchase a new computer and that a sum of around £190.00 was still needed to complete the purchase. Following discussion, it was agreed that a grant up to this level could be awarded to the Play Group subject to the production of a written request, together with an invoice detailing the full costs etc., and confirmation as to whether the purchase is being supported by other grant giving bodies. (e.g. Chedburgh Parish Council). This was proposed by Cllr N Melero and seconded by Cllr Betts.- all agreed. *Action: Cllr Betts*

### 14. Requests for donations. – Section 137 of LGA 1972

Requests for a donation had been received from *St Edmundsbury Newstalk*, a local charity providing a weekly audio service and bi monthly magazine to the blind and partially sighted. Whilst it was not possible to gauge how many parishioners might benefit from these services it was agreed following discussion that a donation of £50 should be awarded with a request that the donation be acknowledged in the charity's publication. *Proposed by Cllr Betts: seconded by Cllr McCormack – all agreed.*

A request had also been received from Age UK Suffolk, a charity that provides a range of services for the elderly across the county. It was agreed to similarly award a donation of £50 to support the organisation's costs. This was proposed by Cllr Betts and seconded by Cllr N Melero – all agreed.

Both donations were awarded under the provisions of Section 137 of Local Govt Act 1972.

### 15. Chevington, Chedburgh, Rede and Depden Summer Fete 2015

Cllr N Melero reported that the Community Council were trying to organise a summer fete, to take place at the Erskine Centre, Chedburgh. No date had been specified and there had been no request for the Parish Council's assistance.

### 16. Parish Council Finances

a) **Receipts** - these were noted as follows:-

Ref	Invoice date	Payee	Activity or Service	Cost (£)
C	23/02/2015	L Fulcher	Cemetery fee re the interment of the Late G W Glarry	250.00

*(post meeting note: Next of Kin subsequently opted for burial in churchyard –full refund given-see b) below - serial 37)*

b) The following invoices and, claims were approved and cheques signed at the meeting:-

Ref	Invoice date	Payee	Activity or Service	Cost (£)
32	19/02/2015	Chris Lewis (Clerk/RFO)	Clerical and admin services from 12 Dec 2014 to 19 Feb 2014 including non taxable expenses.	470.10
33	19/02/2015	HMRC	PAYE income tax on Clerk's Salary	101.14
34	19/02/2015	Chris Lewis (Clerk/RFO)	Annual compensation payment (non taxable) for use of Clerk's home as Parish Council Office	160.00
35		St Eds News talk	Donation under S137	50.00
36	19/02/2015	Age UK Suffolk	Donation under S137	50.00

The following refund was processed after the meeting as an urgent payment.

37	23/02/2015	L Fulcher	Refund of burial fee - see a) above	250.00
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c) Lloyds TSB Bank Treasurer's Account balance on 30/11/2014 was confirmed as £25,458.65

**17. Governance Committee – date of next meeting**

It was agreed that this should take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 at 2.30pm.

**18. Correspondence.**

The following correspondence was circulated for information, after the meeting:-

- (i) SALC – Suffolk Greenest County Competition –*for information and consideration*
- (ii) NALC – Financial Topic Note-*for information*
- (iii) St Edmundsbury Borough Council –Rural News –Jan 16 –*for information*
- (iv) SALC - Ceiling for Section 137 expenditure - *for information*
- (v) SALC LAIS 1372 –Transparency Code – *this would not be mandatory for small authorities in 2015/16. However, the likelihood is that the requirement to publish information online would apply from 2016/17. It was agreed that in the interim careful thought should be given as to how this might best be achieved.*
- (vi) SALC –Automatic Precept referendum for rises above 2% - *confirmation that Government would not be implementing this for small authorities in 2015/16*
- (vii) SALC- Forthcoming Courses for Clerks and Councillors - for information
- (viii) SALC -The Electronic Summons (agendas by e-mail) - ditto
- (ix) SALC – Councillors travelling expenses - (“ “)

**19. Any other business/ urgent matters**

There was no other business.

**20. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that due to a number of absences during the week commencing April 13<sup>th</sup>, the Parish Council's next meeting, originally scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> April, should be deferred. This will now take place at the Village Hall on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at 7.00pm.

*There no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.05 pm.*

Chairman .....