

Minutes of the Remote Parish Council meeting held on 12 October, 2020 via Zoom.

- 10.20.00 **PRESENT:** Alan Newman in the chair, Nick Bird, John Sones, Andrew Woodgate, Andrew Morton, Fiona Watt, County Councillor Robert Lyndsay, District Councillor L Jamieson the clerk and a member of the public were present.
- 10.20.01 **APOLOGIES:** Stan Coram.
- 10.20.02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON AGENDA ITEMS:** There were no declarations of interest.
- 10.20.03 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September, 2020 were signed as an accurate record.
- 10.20.04 **4.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Footway, Whatfield Road –** SCC are seeking advice from their legal team to see if they can encroach on The Green to provide the required width for the footpath.
- Closures of Children's Centres goes ahead after scrutiny gives it the nod** On 25 August, the Cabinet agreed to reduce the number of Children's Centres in Suffolk from 38 to 17 full-time and 11 part-time Family Hubs.
- Motion for 20mph default limit in villages and towns in Suffolk** Robert is proposing this motion (seconded by a Lib Dem colleague) to full council on 22 October as he feels county's piecemeal approach to changing speed limits is overly expensive and complicated.
- Consultation on division boundary changes begins again for 2025** The boundary commission has begun consulting on changes to Suffolk county council division boundaries which will bring the number of county councillors down from 75 to 70 and will not now happen until May 2025. The proposals have to cut the current ten divisions and ten councillors in the Babergh area to nine divisions and nine councillors. Under the current proposal, Elmsett and Aldham will be moved into a new enlarged Brook division, while Kersey and Whatfield will be tacked onto Hadleigh. The draft recommendations and boundary changes are available to view on the Boundary Commission's website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/suffolk-county-council> The consultation on these recommendations will run from 15 September – 23 November and can be found here: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/18495>
- Quiet Lanes** The cabinet has given Highways £235,000 from last year's budget surplus to promote Quiet Lanes where parish councils request them. I understand that these are generally for roads where the national speed limit applies but there is low traffic and demand for use by pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders. The aim is not to calm traffic but to make drivers more aware and encourage more foot and cycle traffic. I have heard from one parish that it has worked to reduce speeds of traffic but they would like more national publicity about what a Quiet Lane is.
- Suffolk County Council decides to oppose Sizewell C** The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council agreed on 22 September that they can no longer support EDF Energy's proposals for Sizewell C in their current form. However, the Cabinet maintained their support for the principle of a new nuclear power station in Suffolk.
- This year's Suffolk Covid spending gap plugged by Government** Suffolk County Council has published their Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report. This focuses heavily on the impact of Covid-19 on the council's finances. The headline figures are that the budget for 2020-21 council is currently looking more or less on track with a net overspend of just £0.4m. A hole of £41m due to extra spending on Covid and lost revenue from Covid was plugged by £39.1 ringfenced Covid grants from Government and £1.7m additional spending from business rates.

4.2 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:- Babergh Chairman re-elected to serve a second term Babergh Council finally had its much-delayed AGM in September. Councillor Kathryn Grandon was duly elected to serve a second term as Chairman of Babergh District Council for 2020/21. Cllr Grandon is the Independent ward member for Hadleigh South, and her chosen charities for 2020/21 are the Hadleigh Dementia Action Alliance, the Hadleigh Scouts, and the Hadleigh Guides. Cllr Adrian Osborne was also returned as Vice Chair. The only challenge of the night involved the planning chairman – Councillor Peter Beer, who was challenged by Councillor Stephen Plumb. After a close vote Peter Beer was returned 18-16.

Potential return to Covid restrictions The council are revising their business continuity plans and internal response structures in light of lessons learned earlier in the year. All groups linked to the Collaborative Communities Board have also now been stood back up. These include –

- Food
- Logistics
- Housing
- Communications
- Community development

Data on people who may need help shielding if shielding returns is also being analysed. It is estimated that the number of people claiming Universal Credit in Suffolk has increased by 75% since March and there has been a 238% increase in the amount of food handed out to single adults and families, from Suffolk's foodbanks. There are also 104,000 people still furloughed from their jobs.

In response to this, the Suffolk Resilience Forum has recently launched a phonenumber to help residents access information or support relating to debt, benefits, housing or employment from the Citizens Advice Suffolk Alliance. Calls can be made free of charge to the phonenumber on 0800 068 3131, from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Planning Concerns The Government recently published two consultation papers outlining major changes in planning. One sets out proposals for a completely new national planning system – the 'Planning for the Future' white paper. The other suggests shorter-term amendments to the current system, which would take effect more quickly. Included in the suggested short-term changes is an amendment to the method for assessing local housing need, which could see an increase to undeliverable rates in Babergh. As a result, the district would be under pressure to deliver more homes in all areas. Proposals also suggest increasing the small sites threshold – below which developers are not required to contribute to affordable housing – from ten to 40 or 50 homes. It is estimated that this could almost halve the number of much-needed affordable homes. Another proposed change, the introduction of First Homes, could also significantly reduce the number of affordable homes in the districts and the proposed First Homes scheme is also set to be exempt from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Following cross-party discussion, concerns raised have been highlighted in a response to the proposed 'Changes to the current planning system' consultation. The same cross-party group of councillors will submit a response to the Government's longer-term overhaul of the planning system following further discussion.

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Public Realm Changes Babergh's cabinet has approved plans which will see the management of public open spaces, playgrounds, and litter bins move in-house, in line with neighbouring Mid Suffolk. Bringing the service in-house, which is already the case in Mid Suffolk, will allow for consistent service standards and increased flexibility. It will also enable the council, jointly with Mid Suffolk, to manage land more holistically to increase biodiversity. Planting wildflower meadows to replace strict grass cutting regimes where suitable and creating wildlife corridors are all options currently being explored by the councils' biodiversity task force sub-group.

BMSDC receive £100,000 government funding to tackle rough sleeping/homelessness Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been awarded £100,000, through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. This is to help cover the costs of commercial hotels needed to provide accommodation and support during the colder weather.

5 Year Housing Supply A report into the current 5-year Housing Land supply in Babergh has demonstrated that the council currently has enough approved developments for 6.75 years. The council is required to have 2184 properties, but actually has 2943 – 35% more.

10.20.05 **RECESS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:** A member of the public clarified the position with regard to a planning application.

10.20.06 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The chairman reported on the meeting of the Airfield Liaison Group on 16 September where Mr Course had agreed to put a piece in the Pooley's Flight Guide to inform pilots of the route to take. The parish council discussed this and although a new entry had been made it was incorrect and didn't have the desired effect. It was agreed to write to the airfield expressing the council's concerns.

Possible closure of the shop and Post Office. The Chairman had spoken to the shopkeepers and although still up for sale they were optimistic that a new buyer would be found and didn't think there was anything the council could do at the present time.

Planning for the Future White Paper – The chairman is awaiting advice before finalising the council's response.

The VHMC AGM on 29 September was cancelled in view of the present situation.

Housing Needs Survey – Councillors discussed this and felt that now was not the right time to carry out the survey. Clerk to check that the grant is still available to carry this out.

10.20.07 **CORRESPONDENCE: BDC** are seeking to plant more trees and hedgerows in order to encourage more wild life as part of their biodiversity plans. There may be money available from DEFRA to plant trees and not necessarily on their own Councils' land and asked whether parish councils had land for such a scheme. Members of the parish council discussed this and asked whether it was parish or private land – Leigh Jamieson agreed to ask the question of Babergh DC

- 10.20.08 **FINANCE:** Accounts Due – invoices were verified (having been previously circulated electronically) cheques were made out to be signed as shown below. The clerk to make arrangements for signature. The council agreed to make a donation to St Peter's Church for maintenance of the graveyard.

Name	Reason	Sum	Council Powers
T Hitchcock	Grasscutting 30 Sept	60.00	Open Spaces Act 1906
A Newman (reimbursement)	Website Hosting	60.00	LGA 1972
HMRC	Emp Tax	253.00	LGA 1972
A Newman (reimbursement)	Stamps and printer cartridge	126.47	LGA 1972
SALC	Payroll Services	22.80	LGA 1972
St Peters Church	Churchyard maintenance	250.00	Open spaces Act 1906 ss 9&10

Tender for grasscutting – it was agreed to seek tenders for the council's grasscutting for the next three years.

- 10.20.09 **PLANNING – DC/20/03958** - Erection of single storey 3 bay cart lodge, Mill Farm, Hadleigh Road Elmsett – The parish council resolved not to restrict the grant of application.

DC/20/03740 - Reconstruction of roof to form additional living accommodation, 14 Windings Road, Elmsett - The parish council resolved not to restrict the grant of application.

DC/20/04294 - Erection two storey side/rear extension with juliette balcony. 4 Flowton Road, Elmsett - The parish council resolved not to restrict the grant of application.

DC/20/04424 Hazel Lodge Whatfield Road Elmsett - Erection of a cartlodge internal alterations – The parish council felt that the site was tight to locate a double entry cartlodge and there was insufficient detail and requested a detail plan so that a formal response can be made.

DC/20/04231 Demolition of 3no existing farm outbuildings & erection of 2no dwellings with associated cart lodges.: Mill Farm, Hadleigh Road, Elmsett. This is the third planning application on this site in the last two years, each one proposing bigger buildings than the previous one.

The parish council did not object to the original conversion of three existing agricultural buildings under application DC/18/03100 because they are existing agricultural buildings that have a use and therefore the parish council considered that their conversion to small residential units would not have a great impact on the countryside. Planning permission for two dwellings was later granted under application DC/19/01949 for two new single storey dwellings following the demolition of three agricultural buildings. This application now proposes two 1.5 Storey dwellings and Cartlodges.

The Design and Access statement says that the site has previously been considered as an appropriate residential site for development in the Neighbourhood Plan for Elmsett 2016-2036. This is not true, the site was part of a larger site (550644) that was considered but no part of the site was allocated in the Plan to 2036. The Design and Access Statement also states That the proposed site & the two adjacent sites directly to the south,

have previously been identified as suitable for residential development with the Elmsett Neighbourhood Plan. Again not true none of the sites are allocated or included in the Elmsett Neighbourhood Made Plan and the sites remain outside the Built Up Area Boundary. In addition the reference to Elmsett as a Key Service Centre is not understood, it is not a term used in the local plan or Neighbourhood Plan. Elmsett is a Hinterland Village and whilst we currently enjoy the service of a primary school pupil numbers are low, the Rose and Crown Public House has not re-opened from its Covid 19 closure in March and the Post Office and General Store is currently for sale. Whilst we are hopeful, as we must be, for the future the situation is not quite as rosy as the applicant would suggest.

This gradual ramping up or incremental increase in size should be avoided. In addition whilst the footprint of this latest application is broadly similar to the previous application its scale is larger and the layout more formal, the roofline is higher than before and this will have a considerable visual impact on the surrounding area.

This application has not been submitted as a revision to those submitted previously and therefore should be considered in its own right. We fully recognise the previous approval of two single storey dwellings on the site but recommend refusal of the current application because of the increase from single storey development to 1.5 storey with associated out buildings.

DC/19/05215 Erection of 2no detached dwellings with shared access to both (re-submission of). Chapel House, The Street, Aldham. The application for two residential dwellings proposes vehicular access too close to the junction of The Street and Hadleigh Road. The creation of the access and the associated slowing and turning movements will create confusion and traffic dangers over the life of the access. The parish council therefore recommends refusal of the application.

10.20.10 **DATES FOR NEXT MEETINGS:** 9 November, 14 December, 18 January and 15 February. The chairman confirmed that the Council would continue to meet virtually via Zoom during the current Covid crisis. Following advice from SALC it was agreed to meet more frequently for shorter periods.

The meeting closed

Signed:-..... Dated:-.....
Chairman