

Minutes of the Virtual Parish Council meeting held on 22 March, 2021 via Zoom.

- 03.21.00 **PRESENT:** Alan Newman in the chair, Nick Bird, John Sones, Andrew Woodgate, Andrew Morton, Fiona Watt, District Councillor L Jamieson, County Councillor Robert Lindsay, and the clerk was present.
- 03.21.01 **APOLOGIES:** Fiona Watt and Stan Coram
- 03.21.02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON AGENDA ITEMS:** There were no declarations of interest.
- 03.21.03 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15 February and a Planning Meeting of 1 March were signed as accurate records.
- 03.21.04 **4.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** – Robert's report had previously been circulated to councillors - **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.  
**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 handing 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.  
**Funding for Hadleigh Community Transport** As he was unable to contribute £1000 towards this group, he donated it towards the Wheels within Wheels wheelchair friendly, car service HCT run to get people to hospital and medical appointments.  
**March full council backs identifying unpaid carers** The council unanimously approved a motion to support Suffolk Family Carers in expanding their database to pick up all carers within Suffolk, drawing information from community organisations and GPs. It has also committed to run an annual marketing exercise to encourage carers to identify themselves and sign up to the database. Suffolk has this week begun offering vaccinations to unpaid carers of clinically vulnerable people or elderly and is urging them to sign up.

**4.2 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Leigh had previously circulated the report to councillors **General fund budget** The Council approved the General Fund Budget proposals for 2021/22 and four-year outlook, at the recent Full council meeting on 23 February 2021.

**Housing revenue account (hra) budget** At the meeting Council also agreed the HRA Budget proposals for 2021/22 and four-year outlook.

**Motion calling for council leader resignation** At the February Council meeting a motion was submitted by councillors in Sudbury calling for John Ward to resign. John Ward has led on the proposed Babergh name change, the closure of the Customer Access Point in Sudbury, the failed sale of Belle Vue to Premier Inn and the instigation of Car Park charges. All without any consultation with the public or Councillors. The motion was ultimately rejected by 2/3 of the Council.

**Babergh and Mid Suffolk – in running for ‘council of the year’**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are joint finalists in a national competition to find ‘the Council of the Year’ – recognising the authorities’ innovative service improvements in supporting their communities through Covid and beyond. The joint entry by Babergh and Mid Suffolk in the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021 saw them named this week alongside Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Wigan Council as finalists for the prestigious Council of the Year title.

**Carbon-saving measures at leisure centres.** Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are set to make further significant CO2 savings, thanks to a £1.4m Government grant for carbon-saving measures at their leisure centres, and other buildings. Funds are expected to see solar PV panels and air source heat pumps installed on the council-owned sites so they can begin to move away from fossil-fuelled heating systems. These include Hadleigh Pool and Leisure. The councils’ climate change ambitions have also taken a step forward, following approval of funding for solar carports. The Cabinet at Babergh approved an additional £300k, for pilot solar carport schemes at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury.

Approval of the funds follow £800,000 of Government matched funding for both councils from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Getting Building Fund. Awarded by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the money is to help deliver jobs, skills, and infrastructure in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Business support grants** Business owners in Babergh and Mid Suffolk are being urged to check what financial support might be available through the Covid-19 Business Support Grant schemes and apply before the 31 March deadline. The Covid-19 business support grants cover different periods of national and local lockdown restrictions from November 2020 until 31 March 2021. The grants can be claimed by both businesses that have been mandated to close as well as those who were able remain open but have been significantly financially affected by lockdown restrictions. Businesses that have not yet claimed any grants can apply retrospectively and can apply for more than one grant if they meet the criteria.

03.21.05 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chairman reported on briefing session held with a highways lawyer with regard to progressing the footway on Whatfield Road. The PC now has to meet again with Suffolk County Council to agree the next steps. Robert Lindsay to liaise to set up a meeting. It was also agreed that there would be a public consultation.

03.21.06 **CORRESPONDENCE:** An update had been received from Babergh DC regarding further consultation and possible timescales on the Solar Farm applications.

03.21.07 **FINANCE:** Appointment of Internal Auditors – Proposed by Nick Bird and seconded by Andrew Morton to appointment of SALC as internal auditors for the year. The following invoices were approved for payment, having previously been electronically submitted to councillors –

Village Hall	Grasscutting Rectory Meadow	600.00	Open Spaces Act 1906
CPRE	Annual Membership	36.00	LGA 1972
ICO	DP fee	40.00	LGA 1972
SALC	Payroll Services	22.80	LGA 1972
HMRC	Employers Tax	253.00	LGA 1972
A Newman	Salary	201.22	LGA 197

The clerk also circulated up to date bank reconciliation. This included a sum of £15,206 CIL payments received.

03.21.08 **PLANNING:** Approval decision from Babergh **DC/21/00704** - Erection of single storey rear extension – Rookery Farm Bungalow, Manor Road **DC/21/00306** - Erection of detached annexed accommodation for use as home office, gym/games room. - 1 Gate Farm Cottages, Ipswich Road.

03.21.09 **DATES FOR NEXT MEETINGS:** 19 April, 17 May, 14 June, 19 July, 6 September, 4 October, 1 November, 6 December.

The meeting closed

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