

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting held in The Old School Community Centre at 7.00 p.m.
on Thursday 21 November 2013**

Present: Cllrs. Keith Haisman, Chair, Paul Bishop, Derek Blake, Margaret Godwin, Phil Gryce, Gayle Mallows,
Alan Parsley, Peter Phillips and Leslie Warmington
Clerk, Claire Ebeling
County Councillor Mary Evans
And 2 parishioners

- 1 **Apologies for absence** – Borough Councillor Alaric Pugh
- 2 **Register of members' interest** – Cllr. Haisman declared an interest in Item 10 (ii) Precept submission relating to Magna Carta, Clare In Bloom and Clare Swimming Club. Cllr. Mallows declared an interest in Item 10 (ii) Precept submission relating to Clare Playing Field Association.

Section of the meeting open to the public:

- 3 **Police Report** – PCSO Sophie Mitchell introduced the new Sergeant for Clare, Gary Miller and presented the police report (see attachment to the minutes).
- 4 **Parishioners' question time** – Parishioner Mr Trinder suggested that a public notice of all questions raised in the public section of Town Council meetings be arranged. Cllr. Haisman responded that the minutes are the public record of Town Council meetings and are available from the Clerk and are also published on the website. It was agreed to consider this as an agenda item at the next meeting.
- 5 **County Councillor's Report** – See attachment to the minutes. Cllr. Godwin thanked Cllr. Evans for her involvement in the prompt repair of the bollard at Bell Corner and for her support in discussions about the Section 106 agreement for Land East of the Granary.
- 6 **Borough Councillor's Report** – Cllr. Pugh sent his apologies and a report – see attachment to the minutes.

End of public section of meeting

- 7 **To approve minutes of previous meeting held on 17 October 2013**
Cllr. Blake proposed an amendment to item 10 – Finance. The amendment and minutes were approved unanimously.
- 8 **To receive an update on actions from the last meeting**
Complete.
- 9 **Clerk's Report** – see attached report.
- 10 **Finance**
 - i) **Presentation of monthly reports** – Cllr. Blake proposed the adoption of the monthly accounts. Approved unanimously.
 - ii) **To approve the Precept submission to St Edmundsbury Borough Council**
Cllr. Blake reported that he had obtained clarification from St Edmundsbury on the Precept application spreadsheet. He explained that whilst the overall Precept amount proposed (£101,786) represented, after the withdrawal of 25% of the St Eds grants, an increase of 3.34% in our net expenditure, it would mean an increase in Council Tax paid by parishioners of 4.6% (£5 per year to Band D households). This was because the grants, which were being withdrawn over the next four years, were additional to the Council Tax raised from parishioners. In simple illustrative terms, Council Tax raised some £80,000, to which St Edmundsbury added two grants totalling some £20,000. £5,000 of these grants were being withdrawn for 2014/15. This £5,000 represented 5% of the £100,000 total, but 6.25% of the £80,000 paid by Parishioners.

Cllr Blake reported that despite the reduction in grants from St Edmundsbury, the net expenditure proposed had reduced. This was because both the Council and the community groups it supported had undertaken a review of expenditure and all groups had requested a figure equal to or lower than that for the previous year. Indeed, most had reduced their request. This had been offset by the request to support new community activity, eg the Friends of Clare Library and the Magna Carta in Clare group, that would produce significant community benefit, but the overall figure was still lower than that for the current year.

Cllr. Blake proposed the adoption of the Precept presented to be submitted by the date stipulated by St Edmundsbury unless anything significant arose before the deadline (in which case any changes would be presented to the full Town Council for approval). This was agreed unanimously.

Cllr Haisman proposed that the Finance Committee review all proformas received from community groups to ensure that all have met the requirements (constitution, control on banking arrangements, audited accounts, statement of expenditure and income, planned expenditure). Cllr Blake agreed to work with the RFO to produce a checklist to be used. **Cllr. Blake/RFO**

iii) Decisions required –

- a) Cllr. Blake proposed the adoption of the Financial Regulations pending any amendments necessary as a result of the new standing orders.
- b) Cllr. Blake proposed the approval of a Section 137 payment of £150 to the Red Cross.
- c) Cllr. Godwin had volunteered to act as Clare Town Council representative on the St Edmundsbury Finance Working Group Forum.
- d) Cllr. Blake proposed that the RFO be congratulated on a 100% clean audit.
All agreed unanimously.

11 Correspondence - see attached report.

Cllr. Haisman responded to the letter regarding Clare Castle Country Park that the issue is still with the CTC lawyers. The due diligence process is progressing slowly as more titles have been uncovered than lawyers were aware of and approval of fees for pre-exchange searches is awaited from SCC. Lawyers can only begin to consider protection of the park spaces once they have full details on all the titles.

12 Planning

- a) **i) DC/13/0409/LB – 13 Church Street – Alterations to loft conversion approved E/87/1757/LB to include (i) change in roof light position (ii) insertion of 1no. roof light and (iii) change in staircase layout**

Cllr. Mallows proposed that the response be that there is no objection. Approved unanimously.

- ii) DC/13/0311/FUL – Clare Hall – Change of use of existing storage accommodation to Class B1 (office)**

Cllr. Mallows proposed that the response be that there is no objection. Approved unanimously.

- b) **Applications received by the Clerk between publishing the agenda and this meeting**
None.

- c) **Land East of the Granary - Section 106 update**

Following the outcome of the recent St Edmundsbury committee meeting to discuss the Section 106 money associated with the Land East of the Granary development, Cllr. Mallows continues to liaise with Borough Councillor Pugh regarding the money available and where it is spent.

13 To receive items for decisions required by Town Council Committees and Working Parties

- i) **Environment Committee – Recommendation to approve the (advance) sale of plots in the cemetery.** Cllr. Parsley recommended approval of the continuation of the sale of cemetery plots (confined to two rows at a time rather than allowing random selection of ‘prime locations’). Approved unanimously.

- ii) **Highways Working Party –Recommendation to approve a follow-up letter to Suffolk County Council for a TRO.** Cllr Godwin proposed that a letter be sent to Suffolk County Council asking which of the criteria for a TRO published on the SCC website Clare does not fulfil and documenting the recent incidents and cost of repairs to the bollards at Bell corner following the collision by an HGV. Approved unanimously.

14 To receive recommendations for items for the next Chevron

It was agreed that the next issue will be distributed in early December and will include an update on the preservation of the kiln at Land East of the Granary, CPFA request for Trustees, an item provided by the Combined Charities, the Pumpkins in the Park event, Hi-Vis vests and a festive message from the Chairman.

15 To discuss any lessons to be learned following the recent storm

The loss of power during the recent storm was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr. Parsley will liaise with CLASP to investigate the possibility of a system being set up to assist parishioners who may not be able to cope alone in such circumstances.

Cllr Parsley

16 To receive an update on Clare Castle Country Park:

a) Management of Visitors Centre bookings

It was agreed that Cllr. Godwin would be the first point of contact for bookings and an online calendar system will be set up to allow access to those authorised. Cllr. Godwin will arrange for a walk through before and after bookings to take place to check the premises. It was agreed that a second set of keys is required.

Cllr. Haisman will contact Suffolk County Council and request that the heating and toilets be dealt with as soon as possible as these problems are preventing booking from being possible.

b) Consideration of the methodology for consultation with parishioners on the final proposed arrangements with SCC

Cllr. Haisman requested that all Councillors consider appropriate and effective methods to consult with parishioners. To be discussed at the next meeting.

All

- c) The draft newsletter update on the park from Geoffrey Bray was approved.

17 To receive agenda items for next meeting

- **To consider methodology for consultation with parishioners on the final proposed arrangements with SCC regarding Clare Castle Country Park**

18 To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 19 December 2013.

Confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Attachment to minutes – Item 6, Police Report

Since the last meeting on 17th October there has been 4 crimes of note. These were:

- Burglary other building – An Antiques warehouse in Clare had approximately £5000 worth of silverware and jewellery stolen from within. This occurred sometime overnight on Sunday 20th October. Offenders were believed to enter the building via an insecure first floor window and then made their way through the property before exiting in the same manner.
- Theft from motor vehicle – A car parked in the country park car park had various items stolen from the rear seat of the vehicle. The car was left unlocked and offenders have opened the door and conducted an untidy search of the rear of the car before stealing a bag containing books, medication, a wallet and small amount of cash. This occurred sometime between the times of 16:25 and 16:45 on Wednesday 23rd October.
- Theft of a beer barrel from the rear of a public house located on Callis Street. This occurred sometime overnight on Friday 25th October.
- Burglary other building – A unit located on a farm on Stoke road was broken into and copper piping stolen from within. This occurred sometime overnight on Tuesday 12th November. No other units on the farm were broken into and other valuable items were overlooked, making us believe they targeted the copper piping specifically.

I have been conducting regular patrols at Clare Primary School after reported parking issues at peak times. I have spoken with a few motorists to advise them on their manner of parking, and the letter I comprised and sent out to all parents seems to have been fairly effective with many parents commenting personally to me to say that it has improved the situation since going out.

The reported male sleeping rough in the cemetery hasn't been encountered since we spoke with him regarding other incidents in the town, we have conducted many patrols of the area and believe that now the colder weather has set in he has relocated elsewhere, but please continue to report to us if he returns.

The male who pitches up in his caravan on Callis Street was spoken to by myself a few weeks back and advised on hassling locals for essential items. I also offered him the contact details of the Traveller Liaison Officers who are keen to offer him support and guidance however he refused this. I haven't seen him there since speaking with him, however I'm sure this isn't the last we will see of him.

The parking issues on the junction of Callis Street and Common Street that were reported to us seem to have improved since the offending vehicles were issued with warning notices. Hopefully they will continue to comply with parking in a reasonable manner.

We would just like to say how successful the remembrance day parade was in the Town. The road closure and marshal's worked extremely effectively and enabled the parade to go without an issue. Our presence reinforced the road closures but it was very well organised and controlled by Suffolk Highways. A day to certainly be proud of and thank you to the Town Council for their involvement in organising the road closure.

General information worth noting:

- There has been a recent series of dwelling burglaries in the rural mid Suffolk area. Although this isn't immediately in the area we cover, we have seen an attempted dwelling burglary in Withersfield and 3 dwelling burglaries in Wickhambrook where jewellery and cash were stolen in the past couple of weeks. With the darker nights now upon us we are asking that all doors and windows are kept secure and any valuable items kept hidden out of sight. **In relation to these a 24 year old male has been recently charged following a fourth burglary in Wickhambrook on Thursday 14th November. He has also been charged with 5 other burglaries in Suffolk (3 of which were the recent Wickhambrook ones) and 2 in Essex from last May.**
- We currently have rural red route patrols in place for Withersfield, Wickhambrook and Thurlow off of the back of increased recent heating oil thefts and burglaries specifically in these areas.
- With the winter fuel allowances now in place at Post Offices in our villages we will also be making extra reassurance visits to these to ensure there are no problems or issues.
- We rely hugely on reports of suspicious behaviour and activity from local residents of the areas we cover to help us tackle crime in the rural communities. So please if you see anything out of the ordinary or you get that feeling something isn't quite right please report it to us straight away so we can hopefully get officers to check out the situation. We would rather be informed and it turn out to be nothing, rather than something go unreported which leads to a crime or incident occurring.

Report for Clare town council 21 November

HIGHWAYS

As you will be aware I supported the successful campaign by Clare town council and Cllr Pugh for section 106 monies from the development of land east of the Granary to be used to fund traffic calming measures in the town.

I am pleased to report that at a recent highways and transport cabinet team briefing it was agreed that SCC should develop a policy for locally purchased/deployed Vehicle Activated Sign units which will cover issues such as health and safety, specifications of the kit and guidance on how long the units should be used at one location

It was also decided that such units would only be allowed to be used subject to the agreement of the local county councillor and an assessment by officers of the suitability of the proposed sites for the units. I will check with officers as to when we can expect this policy to be drawn up – and advise you accordingly so that we can plan the deployment of VAS in Clare.

As you will also be aware the bollard opposite The Bell Hotel was struck and shattered by an HGV on 30 October. The local area highways team acted very quickly to organise removal of the damaged bollard and installation of a new one. Our new contractors however initially said they couldn't send out a team to undertake the work until a health and safety risk assessment had been conducted and that would take two weeks to arrange.

The areas highways office reported this problem to me and together we were able to insist that this was a priority. The work was duly completed – including a risk assessment – within 48 hours.

HGVS

I am disappointed at the slow progress I am making on tackling the problem of HGVS in Clare. The HGV survey, agreed in late July, appears to be no nearer.

Having had a full explanation of how a camera survey would be conducted I fear it would be an expensive waste of time as it would not give us any information on the origins/destination of HGVS travelling through the town.

The difficulty about conducting a thorough origin/destination survey is that highways still cannot find a suitable location where HGVS can be directed safely offroad so that the drivers can be interviewed by a survey team.

Cllr Graham Newman, the portfolio holder for roads and transport, understands and shares my frustration at the lack of progress and we are meeting soon to try to speed matters up

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ORDERS FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

I wrote a paper for Cllr Newman in the summer on various aspects of the operation and policies of SCC highways/transport. An issue of concern for me was the proposal that from next year communities would have to pay significant sums for the traffic management, closing roads and/or stopping parking for community events.

I am very pleased to report that this proposal has been reviewed and dropped. There will be no charge for the traffic management for events such as Remembrance Day Parades. Community events requiring traffic orders to stop on street parking which this year were invoiced for £40 were facing the prospect of being charged £700 next year. We have agreed that sum will be increased to just £50.

This change of policy will cost about £50,000 but we felt that SCC must support communities across the county.

COUNTY WIDE BUDGET

Proposals designed to save £38million next year have been published by SCC, ahead of today's (21/11/2013) meeting of the county council's scrutiny committee. While the final details of next year's budget won't be agreed until next February's full council meeting, the cross-party scrutiny committee have a first look through the proposals this month, in order to study the details and make recommendations to help with the final plans. The county council needs to meet a projected budget gap of £156million over the next four years. This is because of annual reductions in the council's funding from the government, together with the need to manage extra demand for services and inflation.

WINTER ROADS

SCC's gritting teams are getting ready for what could be a challenging few months. While long-range forecasts don't suggest anything too severe in the run-up to Christmas, county council staff at the highways depots are ready preparing. The gritting teams have done practice runs of their routes over the past couple of weeks. There are now 25,000 tonnes of grit in eight depots across the county. In a normal year 25,000 tonnes is enough to keep Suffolk's roads clear, but last year's bad weather saw 32,000 tonnes used. I am assured the stocks can quickly be topped up if the winter turns out to be particularly icy.

Mary Evans, Clare Division, Suffolk County Council

Attachment to minutes – Item 6, St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor's report

Period: 16th May-20th June 2013 Author: Councillor Alaric Pugh

This is a monthly report on activities conducted by Alaric Pugh, Borough Councillor for Clare, on behalf of the whole community, following the election on 5th May 2011. I am delighted to have been elected to represent Clare and work hard to uphold the interests of the town at St Edmundsbury Borough Council. I am Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Transport and Planning. The committees I sit on are: Development Control, Rural Working Party, Sustainable Development Working Party, and I Chair the Growth Working Party and am a Board Member of One Haverhill. I attend Dedham and Stour Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Project Board Meetings and have shared delegated authority for aspects of Clare Country Park managed by St Edmundsbury. My chief role is to ensure Clare and its residents have a voice at the Borough Council table. I expect to be in attendance at Town Council meetings and will be happy to answer any questions from councillors or parishioners after my report. I run a surgery between 9.30 and 10.00 am on the first Saturday of the month for residents whose questions cannot be addressed at the Town Council Meeting. I can be contacted at other times: my mobile phone number is: 07930460899 and email alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk

It's been a heavy month.

1. Training undertaken since last report - Gypsy and Travellers, council re-organisation, Communities and Families policy changes

Civic events/business

- α) Remembrance Day services

Meetings attended (excluding Majority Group meetings)

Cabinet Planning	Cabinet
Joint Cabinet Planning	Development Control
Ec Dev Briefing	Full Council
One Haverhill Board Masterplanning Workshop	Sustainable Development
Site inspection - solar farm	Parking strategy research briefing
Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project	
Three Peer Review sessions	

Forthcoming meetings before next TC Meeting

1. Cabinet Planning and Cabinet
2. Full Council
3. Apex Panel
4. Joint portfolio holders SCC briefing
5. SCC transport briefing
6. One Haverhill Board Meeting

Voting record - recent items with some significance to Clare community:

For a large solar Farm on the Lackfield Estates that is not visible and uses only Grade 4 agricultural land
For the North West Bury St Edmunds Masterplan

Current Clare issues involvement/resident requests to take forward:

1. I attended the Havebury Housing Clare issues walkaround with the Police and Havebury
 2. work on lorry movement issues ongoing with SCC officers and councillors
 3. Clare Country Park
 4. various local planning queries
- Land East of the Granary issues

Please nb: yet another request from a different source for some bike park visibly in the town centre hopefully near the Co-op

More generally, I am currently working on:

- β) formalising the delivery of a Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth in West Suffolk
- χ) transport and skills strategies as they affect West Suffolk
- δ) innovation in rural transport solutions

NEWS:

- You will know that local teamwork has secured both the traffic calming measures and a bus stop for lower Nethergate Street/Stoke Road
- Since we met last St Eds has spent quite a bit of time engaged in the first stage of our version of Ofsted called The Peer Challenge where the performance of 'West Suffolk' as a joint Council is being reviewed (so far so good)
- I have also been involved in the appointment of the new Head of Planning who will start in January
- The Council's first appointment with the word Commercial in the title has also been made - in relation to the Apex and other Council-owned facilities
- The Council itself has also rejected the County Council's Waste Transfer solution for the area and has successfully won a review of the process
- Town Centre Masterplanning for Haverhill has also begun
- St Eds has been found Not Guilty of negligence over its organisation of the Nowton Park event during which there was a tragic fatality
- Re support Grant base level Band D figures are being sent out to parishes as promised with apologies for a small delay
- Progress is being made jointly with other Suffolk and Norfolk authorities with finding solutions for locating gypsies and travellers within the area of their traditional/habitual travelling patterns

Many of these items will have further information provided at future Town and Parish Conferences.

Next surgery which will be held on Saturday 7th December

Attachment to minutes – Item 13, Clerk’s Report – November 2013

Action:

- To agree to re-review the Standing orders in conjunction with the recently published revision by NALC.
Action: It was proposed that the Power of Wellbeing section be removed from the approved standing orders and to continue with the September 2013 version until May. Cllr Phillips and the Clerk will review the new version ahead of May.
- **The Remembrance Parade went well, with positive feedback from the Police. However, there was concern that the Boy’s Brigade had not been briefed fully. Clerk to discuss with the British Legion Women’s Section.**

Information:

- Work to footpaths required (between CCP School and Cemetery and behind The Swan – reported to SCC reference Rights of way reference: 3184155 – update received 20/11/13 – ‘the route will be inspected in due course’.
- Several streetlights have been reported as not working *again* – only a few have been dealt with to date.
- The application to Havebury for a grant to assist with the cost of replacing benches has been successful and two new benches should be fitted in the coming weeks.
- I have contacted St Edmundsbury to ask why I have not received notification of decisions on planning applications for several months and if this practise can be reinstated. St Edmundsbury confirmed that the decision was made some months ago not to send notifications of decisions to any other parties than the applicant and that in the future it is likely that planning applications will not be sent to Parish/Town Councils as hard copies but will be available online.
Action: It was agreed that a letter will be sent to the Borough Councillor and Head of Planning at St Edmundsbury Borough Council objecting to this proposal.

Attachment to minutes – Item 15, Correspondence:

Items for action

(all circulated to Town Councillors)

- Christmas Light Committee Request to sell raffle tickets to raise funds for the Christmas Lights fund on the morning of Sat 23rd November.
Approved unanimously
- Harriet Loram Permission for a table for The Friends of Clare Library in Market Hill on 30 November 2013
Approved unanimously
- Stephen Kimminau Clare Castle Country Park - request for update on statutory protection.
See minutes.

Items for noting

(copies available from the Clerk on request)

- Chris Mitchell Letter of congratulations following 'Pumpkins in the Park' event
- Patrick Daniels Update on The White House