

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BRENT ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 20 AUGUST 2020 VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

**Present:**

Cllr Kevin Went (Chairman)  
Cllr Martin Austin  
Cllr Natalie Helms  
Cllr Karen Marshall

**Apologies:**

Cllr Francesca Scoones  
District Cllr Bryn Hurren

**In Attendance:**

William Grosvenor (*Clerk to the Council*)  
County Cllr Robert Lindsay

		<b>Action</b>
<b>20.27</b>	<b>CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME</b> Cllr Went welcomed all present to the meeting.	
<b>20.28</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Scoones and District Cllr Hurren.	
<b>20.29</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
<b>20.29.01</b>	<b>To Receive Amendments to the Register</b> There were no amendments to the Register.	
<b>20.29.02</b>	<b>To Receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda</b> There were none.	
<b>20.29.03</b>	<b>To Receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda</b> There were none.	
<b>20.29.04</b>	<b>To Receive Full / Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared</b> It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.	
<b>20.30</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 16 July 2020 and sign them as a true and accurate record. <b>Proposed by:</b> Cllr Went <b>Seconded by:</b> Cllr Marshall	
<b>20.31</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT</b> Although having sent his apologies, Cllr Hurren distributed his report in advance of the meeting and it is appended below at <b>Appendix 1</b> . Councillors expressed their thanks for the update; Cllr Lindsay asked the Clerk to forward a copy to him.	Clerk
<b>20.32</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT</b> Cllr Lindsay took Members through his report, previously distributed. The report is appended below at <b>Appendix 2</b> . In relation to the allocation of funding for cycling, one focus will be the creation of cycling routes through Sudbury. On the bus timetables, Cllr Marshall will supply a copy to the Clerk for the Parish Council notice board.	Cllr Marshall

20.33	<b>TO DISCUSS ANY VILLAGE MATTERS</b> None were raised.	
20.34	<b>TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR</b> Cllr Went reported that apart from shed break-ins in surrounding areas, there was nothing to report. However he reminded everyone of the prevalence of dog / puppy theft, and the importance of being vigilant in that respect.	
20.35	<b>TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER REPORTS ON FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS</b>	
20.35.01	<b>To receive the financial update report</b> The Clerk reported that, as at 31 July 2020, the balance on the Lloyds Bank account, after allowing for un-presented cheques, stood at £4,406.79.	
20.35.02	<b>To consider and approve payments</b> The following payments required approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £30.00 reimbursement to the Parish website manager for training provided via SALC</li> <li>• £470.00 reimbursement to the Clerk in respect of the cost of painting the village telephone box settled by BACS.</li> </ul> <b>It was RESOLVED</b> to approve these payments. <i>Proposed by:</i> Cllr Went <i>Seconded by:</i> Cllr Helms	Clerk Cllr Helms Cllr Went
20.35.03	<b>Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) subscription</b> The Clerk reported that no request has been made by SPS for subscription renewal since February 2019, when payment was last made. <b>It was AGREED</b> to continue the subscription as representing value for money and the Clerk will liaise with SPS accordingly.	Clerk
20.35.04	<b>To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit report for 2019/20</b> The internal audit report, which was unqualified, was received by Councillors and <b>NOTED</b> . Mr Michael Warner was thanked for undertaking this task on behalf of the community.	
20.35.05	<b>To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20</b> Having satisfied themselves that the system of internal control within the Council adequately meets the needs of a small parish council, <b>it was RESOLVED</b> to approve the Annual Governance Statement, which will be duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk. <i>Proposed by:</i> Cllr Helms <i>Seconded by:</i> Cllr Marshall	Clerk Cllr Went
20.35.06	<b>To consider the Accounting Statements for 2019/20</b> The Clerk summarised the Accounting Statements and supporting papers, which were discussed and <b>AGREED</b> . The gross income for 2019/20 was £2,798.68 and the gross expenditure was £2,482.20. The Council had previously (at its meeting on 16 July 2020) agreed to certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review by virtue of its small turnover.	
20.35.07	<b>To approve the Accounting Statements for 2019/20 by Resolution</b> <b>It was RESOLVED</b> to approve the Accounting Statements for 2019/20; they should be duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer. <i>Proposed by:</i> Cllr Went <i>Seconded by:</i> Cllr Helms	Clerk Cllr Went

20.35.08	<p><b>To review the Council's Asset Register</b> This was reviewed (to include the 2019 grit bin purchase) and <b>AGREED</b>.</p>	
20.35.09	<p><b>To appoint the Internal Auditor for 2020/21</b> <b>It was AGREED</b> to invite Mr Michael Warner to be the Council's Internal Auditor for 2020/21.</p>	Clerk
20.36	<p><b>TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was reported that Clay Lane was becoming rutted again; the cause was thought to be a Land Rover. Some of the surface damage at the Brent Eleigh end was only repaired with loose soil etc. and is not a permanent repair.</li> <li>• In relation to the Village Hall post lockdown - Cllr Marshall will liaise with the Chair of the Village Hall Committee about the actions required to re-commission the hall for public use.</li> <li>• In the light of the £10k Government Covid-19 grant to the Village Hall, it was recognised that the Parish Council will need to reconsider priorities for use of its reserves. <b>It was AGREED</b> to put this matter down for a discussion at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.</li> </ul>	Cllr Marshall  Clerk
20.37	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a follow up discussion on footpaths, it was <b>NOTED</b> that the hedge along Footpath 11 has been cut, and although the sloping path itself could benefit from improvement, it is in no worse a state than it has been for the last 10 years. The overgrown hedge along Footpath 5 (in the vineyard) has also been cut. Cllr Went will have a look at footpath 10, to see whether the concerns raised about obstructions need remedial action.</li> <li>• The Clerk raised the notice of intention by Babergh Council to carry out a Community Governance Review, looking at both parish boundaries and the numbers of parish councillors on each council. Implementation of this review will have been delayed by Covid-19, and no progress so far appears to have been made.</li> <li>• Babergh is consulting on its latest Statement of Licensing Policy up to 16 September 2020. This is a statutory requirement which the Council has to update every 5 years, and which sets out the parameters for the making of licensing decisions by the District Council. This was <b>NOTED</b>.</li> </ul>	Cllr Went
20.38	<p><b>PLANNING ISSUES</b></p>	
20.38.01	<p><b>Planning Consultation Paper and other Government consultations</b> The Clerk had previously distributed information and links to the consultation documents in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Changes to the current planning system</b> – This document relates to primarily technical changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ methodology for assessing housing need</li> <li>○ securing first homes via developer contributions</li> <li>○ temporarily lifting the small sites threshold</li> <li>○ extending the current permission in principle to major development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transparency and Competition</b> – This is a call for evidence on the control of land; whether rights of pre-emption, options and conditional contracts should be included in the registered land system.</li> <li>• <b>Planning for the Future consultation paper</b> – this is the main consultation paper which will affect how planning in the future is carried out and how and where homes are built will be decided. Changes proposed (and possibly varied following consultation) will require primary legislation and are unlikely to come into force until 2024.</li> </ul> <p>The report was <b>NOTED</b>.</p>	
20.38.02	<p><b>Babergh consultation on draft housing land supply statements</b></p> <p>Babergh commissioned consultants Lichfields to produce a draft 5 year housing land supply statement which is now out to consultation. The statement helpfully identifies a supply of 6.64 years. The 5 year requirement is 2,184 dwellings and the supply is considered to be 2,900 – thus producing a surplus of 716.</p> <p>The detailed schedules in terms of sites and units contain reference to the following sites in Brent Eleigh, where it is stated they are anticipated to start building in 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge Farm barns</li> <li>• Abbotts Hall</li> <li>• Brent Eleigh Hall</li> <li>• Hill Farm barns.</li> </ul> <p>The report was <b>NOTED</b>.</p>	
20.38.03	<p><b>To Consider Planning Applications received</b></p> <p>(1) <b>DC/20/03407 – The Old Rectory, Hall Road – Application for permission to carry out works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order</b></p> <p>This application was for reduction of crown volume of 1 x birch, 1 x horse chestnut and 3 x sycamore trees by up to 30%. Following discussion Councillors had no comment to make.</p> <p>(2) <b>DC/20/03511 – Wroughton Lodge, Lavenham Road – application to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area</b></p> <p>This application was for the felling of 1 x Cherry tree, re-shaping the crown of 1 x red oak, reduction in crown and pollarding 1 x willow, felling of 1 x cedar and cut back overhang of 2 x oak trees. Following discussion Councillors had no comment to make.</p>	
20.39	<p><b>DATES OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Thursday 22 October at 7.30pm via Zoom. Joining instructions will be posted on the Brent Eleigh village website as before.</p> <p>The final meeting of the Council in 2020 will take place on 3 December 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom.</p>	
20.40	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS</b></p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.</p>	

## **APPENDIX 1: REPORT FROM DISTRICT CLLR BRYN HURREN**

While we are seeing some return to normal in business and working arrangements it is generally felt that the new normal will be a long way from what we are used to.

At the council staff continue to work from home although planning environmental and enforcement staff are now allowed site visits to enable them to carry out their basic functions.

Across Babergh there have been 277 reported cases of Coronavirus resulting in 59 deaths. Many in our care homes where they should have been safe.

The financial impact on all councils will be huge and felt for many years to come and my own council will be no exception, taking into account the loss of revenue and extra expense incurred the impact upon Babergh will be around two million pounds which will make budget setting into the immediate future very difficult. This has brought from national government the call for unitary government across Suffolk upon their terms of course.

As co - chair of the joint Audit and Standards Committee it will fall to myself to see that every penny is spent wisely and that every penny that can be saved, will be.

In my first full year in this role I have to say that the Baberghmidssuffolk officers are exemplary in this task and role and every penny that can be invested to earn a dividend is, even if we only hold it for a brief moment, we also try to buy services local although not at any cost, we also try to see that all bills are paid even if as in this time, it takes a while.

We are also landlords to 3,400 tenants, this is up about 150 dwellings thanks to an extensive effort at funding and extending our housing portfolio despite the awful RTB still draining our valuable stock, with the continued rise in house prices and the ongoing stampede from our major cities this represents a valiant effort to see that every resident that deserves a home has one and that we can at least provide a home for a future generation of Babergh and this will be the only option for a reasonable priced dwelling for many into the future. Our solar panels continue to provide a valuable income although it was down to about £350,000 this year due to some maintenance issues.

Planning issues continue to make the wrong sort of headlines with consent given to some very unpopular sites in the wrong places with no meaningful infrastructure to cope with them. Coupled with this we have had outrageous and unnecessary delays in settling and completing our Joint Local Plan which would have been so important in obtaining and steering good planning decisions.

Locally in the absence of normal council functions, I have thrown myself into all the local issues such as the Home but not Alone scheme which did so well in making sure that no one was left without provisions or medication some human contact and a number to call if just frightened.

This scheme worked brilliantly and has done so much to shore up a neighbourly network as has the much needed foodbanks that have sprung up in some churches and villages across the community and I am afraid that these are here to stay as the last lifeline for many low waged and out of work families.

Locally this has been the busiest time as your councilor but also in so many ways very rewarding as we adjust to what we have in store for our future. I continue as always to support what I think is good and beneficial for the district as a whole and fight what is not.

Thanks to William for setting up this meeting and to all Councillors for being here.

Happy to answer questions and follow up on any themes you wish to develop. Please email any that you have and I will promptly get back to you.

I am afraid that I cannot be with you tonight as I am not allowed to use Zoom on Council equipment but hopefully your next meeting will be one that can actually be held in VH. And I can attend.

Bryn Hurren.

## **APPENDIX 2: REPORT FROM COUNTY CLLR ROBERT LINDSAY**

### **Pension saves £20m**

I may have reported in the past that as a member of the Suffolk pension committee I was pushing the committee to reduce the pension fund's exposure to fossil fuel stocks. I'm pleased to say that the committee decided to move some funds at the end of last year into a low carbon tracker "Climate Aware" fund. They moved about £260m in two phases with the second phase switching in January. This was just before the crash in global stock markets due to the pandemic which was led by oil and gas stocks. As a result, the Climate Aware fund lost about 17% in value, but the traditional funds from which we switched lost about 21% which meant we saved about £20m by moving.

## **Cycling wins funding thanks to revised cycle strategy**

Two years ago, my motion to set up a cycling working group to draw up a prioritised, costed list of cycle routes in the county received unanimous support. After much delay the working group's recommendations were approved by cabinet last month, just in time for some emergency funding for cycling and walking from the Government. The Government has just awarded the county 112% of the money than it originally allocated to us because of the strength of the county's bid. The money will not fund all the cycle routes on the list but having a list means we are more likely to win bids when they arise. Babergh is working closely with Suffolk to refine the list and there is an opportunity for communities to put in their own suggestions for routes for investment using emergency money that is coming for Government for this purpose.

## **Funding and pandemic**

Suffolk County Council agreed its budget before the pandemic. Since then it has received extra funding from the Government to cover some of the considerable extra costs of the crisis. However the council says this is unlikely to be enough when budgets, particularly for social care, were already strained even before.

## **Test and trace Suffolk**

I have been assured by the Director of Public Health that he is now getting the data on local community testing from central Government that he needs to enable local lockdowns should there be a local outbreak. However, I am not clear whether enough testing is yet being done, outside care homes, to pick up outbreaks in time.

## **112 Go Start Bus Bildeston to Sudbury via Brent Eleigh**

This bus has been up and running since the start of lockdown and has not missed a single trip. Passenger numbers have been low as was expected due to lockdown. It has run empty on two occasions. The driver and all customers are wearing masks as per new rules. I hope you have been sent a laminated timetable. If not I have a couple spare for you to put on the noticeboard.

## **School Buses**

Due to social distancing rules, no spare seats will be offered on school buses for those starting school in September. I have had three families in the area raise this as a problem for them which I have passed on to the cabinet member in charge of education and school transport.

## **New footpath declared between Clay Lane and Preston St Mary**

The county's Development and Regulation Committee voted on 15 July to approve a new "restricted byway" running north between two parallel hedges from Clay Lane to link up with the surfaced roadway to Hillhouse Farm, Preston. A couple of short lengths of this track are already public footpath but the committee heard that it had been a proper highway (unpaved) in Victorian times and therefore legally the county had to declare it a restricted byway, which allows access to everything but motor vehicles.

## **Sudden closure of Age UK Suffolk**

Age UK Suffolk ceased operations from Friday 24 July. This is a huge loss for our county, and I know that many residents will be concerned about the loss of vital support for themselves or elderly friends/relatives.

Age UK ran a day care centre in Sudbury, on the Chilton Industrial Estate, for around 50 people with dementia, they used GoStart to transport many of these people and in return let GoStart sub let part of the premises to use as their depot and head office. GoStart is looking to find a new tenant to take over the day care centre, in the hope it can remain there.

## **Climate emergency recommendations published**

On 14 July, the Cabinet approved the recommendations of a cross-party panel aiming to bring council carbon emissions to zero by 2030.

Key recommendations include:

All future decisions must take into account carbon emissions

- Annual publication of a carbon budget alongside the financial budget
- Publish a cross-council action plan by the end of 2020 for net zero emissions across Suffolk

- Changing to a 100% renewable energy tariff
- Replacing all pool cars and service vehicles with fully electric vehicles by 2025
- Develop an investment programme for renewable energy generation on the county farms estate
- For all existing council buildings (including maintained schools), switch away from oil, LPG and natural gas use by 2030 and invest in onsite renewable energy generation
- Provide advice for academies/free schools to develop their own net zero emissions plans