
22.62 To receive a report from the village Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

There was nothing to report.

22.63 To receive and consider reports on financial and governance matters**22.63.01 Financial update report**

The Clerk tabled copies of the updated cashbook and bank reconciliation, which showed the balance in the Council's account with Lloyds Bank, as at 30 June 2022, and after allowing for un-presented cheques amounting to £502.24, standing at £4609.77. From that current balance the following sums are continuing to be held as earmarked reserves:

- £1,000.00 as a contribution towards running costs / improvements at the village hall.
- £380.34 CIL payment received on 11 October. This has to be expended by October 2026 and will be applied to a specific CIL funded project once more CIL monies are received.

22.63.02 Approval of payments

There were no payments to be approved. However **it was RESOLVED** to ratify the payment made on 28 June in the sum of £362.24 in respect of renewal of the Council's insurances, a decision in respect of which was previously delegated to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair; and also to renew the Council's annual subscription to the Suffolk Preservation Society (£30) to be paid by Direct Debit. Cllr Went signed the mandate and would arrange for it to be signed by Cllr Helms and then returned to the Clerk.

Proposed by: Cllr Marshall

Seconded by: Cllr Austin

22.63.05 To agree to finalise the Jubilee Memorial seat project

It was AGREED to defer further consideration of this until the September meeting when hopefully all Members could be present. Whilst the Council has the power to erect seats on public land under s1 Parish Councils Act 1957, there may be a need to seek a licence to do so from the County Council as Highways Authority, bearing in mind that the triangle is Highways' land. This would be another consideration.

It was then agreed to take the District Councillor's report and revert to the order of the Agenda

22.59 To receive the District Councillor's report

Cllr Hurren reported as follows:

- He apologised for his late arrival having come directly from a meeting with Citizen's Advice (he is the Babergh Council representative on that body). He explained how much Citizen's Advice is under pressure at the moment with much greater demand on its services than it can meet. Cllr Hurren will try to obtain more funding for its work from Babergh.
 - In terms of Babergh's own workforce, 1 in 20 staff have been away from work at some time due to Covid.
 - On a positive note, there will be free swimming lessons / football coaching during the summer holidays for children free of charge.
 - There will be District Council elections in May 2023 and there is a drive to recruit new councillors, with an emphasis on how councillors can make a difference to their communities, and how rewarding that can be.
 - In respect of planning matters, Cllr Hurren reported that the latest application for 64 homes in Boxford is up for refusal – but if refused is likely to be appealed. [This is the application that Boxford PC took Babergh to judicial review over.] He also reported that the application for a Traveller site on land north of Second pits, Highlands road, Monks Eleigh (DC/19/04923) has been allowed on appeal following a hearing on 8 June 2022.
-

22.64 To receive reports from Councillors**22.64.01 Defibrillator - update**

Cllr Marshall reported that it is now unlikely that grant aid for a defibrillator in the village will be forthcoming.

22.65 To receive the Clerk's report**22.65.01 Rural services survey**

The Clerk took Members through a hard copy version of the survey, enabling its completion and return to Community Action Suffolk.

- 22.65.02 Babergh's parking strategy**
The Clerk reported that he had attended the drop-in event at Lavenham Village Hall on 21 June. It appeared that there are no concrete proposals as yet and it will be important to maintain a watching brief as the strategy evolves.
- 22.65.03 Parish trees, hedgerows and wildflower scheme 2022**
This is a repeat of the 2021 scheme where Babergh DC is offering trees and hedging for planting on land with public access. Also on offer are wildflower seed mixes for meadow creation. **It was AGREED** to refer this to the Village Hall Committee for consideration in relation to Town Hill.
- 22.65.04 Iron bridge adjacent to A1141**
Cllr Went still to take photographs of the existing bridge / site for the Clerk to forward to the Babergh Heritage team.
- 22.65.05 Protection for the grass area around the village sign - update**
The Clerk had previously reported that his request to Suffolk County Council for a licence to erect oak posts on the corners of the triangle to protect it from vehicle incursions was misunderstood as a request for Suffolk Highways to fund the work itself. Given the Jubilee bench project will also require permission from Suffolk Highways as owner of the grass area, he will contact Suffolk CC again in respect of both issues.
- 22.65.06 Cundys Lane**
The Clerk had previously reported his investigations into the status of Cundys Lane, prompted by advice from Brook Farm that the lane was not included in the parcels of land purchased by them although it runs through their land. Cundys Lane is shown on the Definitive Map as a track from The Street (unclassified road no 8155) crossing the A1141 and leading to Town Hill. It is shown classified as a public highway. However on the current County Highways' schedule of highways maintained at public expense only the short section of Cundys Lane between The Street and the A1141 is shown. There is no mention of the much longer section between the A1141 and Town Hill. This anomaly was raised with the County Public Rights of Way (ROW) Team on 18 February 2022 and a response finally received on 21 July. It appears that the query was forwarded to Highways records who have not responded and the Clerk will need to take up the matter directly with them.
- 22.65.07 Thermal imaging camera project survey**
The Clerk reported a communication from Suffolk Climate Change Partnership asking whether the Parish Council would be interested in borrowing a thermal imaging camera to carry out a community heat loss survey. Following a brief discussion **it was AGREED** not to express an interest in this project.

22.66 Planning issues

- 22.66.01 To consider planning applications received**
- 1. DC/22/03471 – Farm buildings at Bridge Farm – application to determine if prior approval for a change of use of agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses and for building operations reasonably necessary for conversion is required**
The application relates to a cluster of farm buildings immediately to the east of Bridge Farmhouse and includes a large timber-framed threshing barn with a lean-to porch, attached buildings including a loose box, a shelter shed, a cart shed / granary, a cowshed, a brick shelter shed and an animal shelter.
Following discussion **it was AGREED** not to make any comments on this application.
 - 2. DC/22/03580 – Street Farm, The Street – application for removal / variation of a condition under planning consent under DC/21/04297**
This application relates to a request to build a new cavity wall on the east facing side of the lean-to extension instead of retaining the existing.
Following discussion **it was AGREED** not to make any comments on this application.
- 22.66.02 Neighbourhood planning**
Members discussed whether to consider the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Brent Eleigh, given that Government grants for the work are available for a final year up to 31 March 2023. It was suggested that it might be worth finding out if Monks Eleigh PC is interested in developing a Joint Plan. The Clerk to contact the Clerk at Monks Eleigh accordingly.
- 22.66.03 Possible breach of planning conditions at Bennetts Piece, Cock Lane**
District Cllr Hurren to ascertain the up to date position.

22.67

Dates of future meetings

22 September 2022 and 24 November 2022, both at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

22.68

Chair's closing remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

APPENDIX 1: REPORT FROM COUNTY CLLR JESSIE CARTER ON BEHALF OF CLLR ROBERT LINDSAY

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

Latest SCC COVID information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk GLI to declare a Cost-of-Living Emergency

Full Council is on the 7th July. Our Group have submitted a motion calling for SCC to declare a Cost-of-Living Emergency, and for the Council to redirect funds and efforts towards targeting those most vulnerable.

Prices for fuel, food and energy are increasing as wages take a real terms cut from the raising inflation. Our Group calls on this government for further support to those falling below the poverty line.

In addition, we are calling on the government to make it easier and cheaper to insulate homes. Our motion asks to waive VAT on energy-saving materials, such as insulation, and adequately fund a retrofitting programme so communities can save money on their bills during winter where energy price caps are due to rise even further.

Cabinet Meeting: SEND Capital Programme

Cabinet met on 20th June to vote on funding the next phase of SCC's programme to build more capacity for SEND children in education. The cabinet agreed a package of £15.9m, as part of a £45m programme.

Currently, there is a high demand for SEND services, with requests for placement going up by 32% since 2020. The funding Cabinet have agreed will create three new specialist units across Suffolk.

Our Group supported such a project, but was mindful of the rising demand and what was needed for the future. The Cabinet agreed a third phase was required, which will be discuss later this year.

National Grid consultation: SCC submit a rejecting response

Last month our Group said we would put pressure on SCC to respond to the consultation, rejecting the current proposals for expanding the on-shore pylon network in Suffolk. Our Group are strongly against the development of more pylon networks impacting Suffolk's rural landscape and cultural heritage. The proposals are even criticised by Conservative MPs Dan Poulter and James Cartledge.

After a meeting with Cabinet member, Cllr Rout, the Conservatives states they will also reject the proposals. SCC have now submitted a response to National Grid, agreeing with our position. They have stated that the application cannot be supported in its current form, and that an offshore alternative must be provided to be considered.

Petition for in-house Suffolk Highways maintenance contract: Still need signatures!

Our Group's petition continues, demanding that SCC produces an in-house bid for the new Suffolk Highways contract. The contract, which will have been held by Kier for 10 years, is up for renewal next year.

Since Kier's arrival, our Group has seen astronomical prices for the maintenance of Suffolk's highways. Some of these prices include £5,000 for a pair of dropped kerbs, £7,500 to cut down a single tree, and £10,000 to design (not build) four humps in a road.

Our Group believes an in-house bid from SCC to take back control of Suffolk Highways is needed to get things done. The bid would also provide a necessary benchmark for any competitive bid coming from external companies, making sure Suffolk taxpayers money is not exploited.

We need 3,675 signatures to bring this to debate at the Council. Please sign here (ensure you make you name public, or it won't count!): https://www.petitions.net/for_suffolk_county_council_to_develop_an_in-house_bid_for_suffolk_highways_maintenance

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