

MINUTES

of the Meeting of Occold Parish Council held at 8pm on Monday 13th September 2010 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr K Chittock, Mr R Burnett, Mr C Cripps, Mrs M Grange, Mr S Hubner, Mr B Hull, Mr A Miller, Mr R Owen

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies had been received from Mr Hewitson who was on holiday and District Councillor Tilbury who was unwell

2. Reports from County Councillor, District Councillor, Community Police Officer

2(1) County Councillor Andrew Stringer gave his report to the meeting

New Strategic Direction

A number of workshops are being held in September to discuss The County Council's "new strategic direction". In the workshops covering letter it stated, "We shall need resources to fund our wellbeing role. Ideally the concept of localism means relying less on central government funding. Whilst the Coalition Government has talked of reviewing local government financing this will undoubtedly be a longer term change. In order to fill the short term gap, do we want to investigate new income generation schemes in the short term? Possible sources of funding could be:

- Using our property to generate revenue income
- Could we become an energy company selling electricity generated on our land and buildings as well as our Energy from Waste Plant.

"We might also want to be the holder of strategic infrastructure that enables smaller enterprises, As we move towards divesting our services there may need to be an interim step of payment by activity and to start creating more commercial skills within our services."

Or in planer language here come the cuts!

Bridge Open at Last

After a mere wait of around 40 years the Bridge enabling Stowmarket to stand a chance of being gridlock free is at last open. This vital link is the largest single piece of infrastructure the county council has been involved in this year. As reported in earlier reports the bridge has artwork etched into the parapets depicting scenes of the industrial past of Mid Suffolk's largest settlement. The opening of this link will also better integrate the near on a thousand houses on Cedar's Park to be able to not only drive to town but also Cycle and walk.

Scrutiny Committees

The Scrutiny committees that sit at the County Council are being reviewed. All of these panels are chaired by the governing group at the moment, and after serving on one for over a year, I am sceptical as to how much real scrutiny is achieved. Our groups submission to the powers that be at County Hall is that the present regime should be scrapped in favour of a more open form of scrutiny were "task and finish" Panels are used to actually tackle

specific issues, rather than the present arrangement were we are told the parameters of the questions we might ask. Hopefully, allowing us mere back benchers a more meaningful role in holding the Leaders and Cabinet to account.

2(2) District Councillor Charles Tilbury had forwarded the following report Emergency budget and specific government grant announcements

The government's emergency budget announced at the end of June contained some announcements that will impact on the resources of the District Council:

- there will be a Council Tax freeze in 2011/12 and potentially also 2012/13. Those Councils able to demonstrate they are managing their costs may be eligible for a grant to freeze Council Tax, but details are not yet available.
- There will be a public sector pay freeze for two years from 2011/12, except for those earning less than £21,000, who will receive a flat £250 increase
- There will be average real term reductions for government departments of 25% over 4 years.

In addition, Housing Planning Delivery Grant has been cancelled, for which we had budgeted income of £200,000. In order to make up for the shortfall we will need to withdraw some of the £0.5m put into reserve in 2009/10.

Comprehensive Area Assessment abolished

The CAA process has been abolished by the new Government, in an effort to reduce the burden of inspection on local government. While this is to be welcomed in terms of the officer time it will save us, incidentally it looked highly likely that our score under the CAA process would have risen from 2 to 3.

Funding for culture and community

The John Peel Centre for Creative Arts, Stowmarket has applied for funding from the People's Millions. The Lukeswood project in Elmswell has already been successful in obtaining funding (of nearly £50,000), being the bulk of the almost £70,000 raised in the District from this source. In addition, the Community Development Officer is working with the residents of Battisford to launch the local pub, the Punch Bowl, as the county's first Community Pub.

Pest control

The Suffolk County Council pest control contract has been put out to tender, and once a preferred bidder has been selected the service is likely to be transferred to them.

Enforcement

Dumping of green waste is causing a problem, and several individuals have already been warned. Action in the form of warnings, issue of Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecutions, has already been taken against over 80 people for fly tipping this year. David Abbott, enforcement officer, is also getting tough on signs which appear on the side of roads advertising events or activities, without authorisation/permission. Where Parish Councils are responsible for these, they are asked to remove them once the events have taken place.

Street cleaning

Following the very successful Spring Clean in the District, several individuals have volunteered as litter pickers, and have been provided with kits by the District Council.

Mortgage rescue scheme

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme was introduced by the Government in 2008 to reduce the number of people losing their homes. Those eligible for assistance can sell their home to a housing association but continue to live in the property, paying a subsidised rent. The scheme targets vulnerable groups, such as families with dependent children, the elderly or others considered vulnerable. They will usually be several months in arrears with their mortgage and be threatened with re-possession by their lender.

In 2009 the scheme was extended to help people in negative equity, with those with debts amounting to more than 20% of the value of their home able to apply.

The District Council is working closely with Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau to help those eligible.

Suffolk streets ahead

Last year we were successful in getting Government funding to run a pilot project to encourage one street in each District to reduce their waste by half in one collection fortnight.

The results of an information campaign (which last year was called 'Seven Suffolk Streets') gave us a waste reduction result of 39% across the households that were involved. Given the importance of reducing the burden on landfills (and the associated rising cost), it has been agreed with our District partners to roll out the project on a larger scale (15 times larger on average) than the first project. The project is called "Suffolk Streets Ahead".

Various bin collection rounds have been put forward by our District colleagues where we believe we can make gains to reduce business, school and household waste and increase recycling rates.

The chosen areas across Suffolk are areas around:

- Mildenhall
- Haverhill
- Elmswell
- East Bergholt
- Sidegate Lane area, Ipswich
- Kesgrave
- South Lowestoft

The main thrust of the project relies upon face to face contact with the community to ensure people understand what they can actively do to reduce the amount of waste they produce. Consequently we are proposing to use teams of 'doorknockers' throughout September and October to actively engage with the public, schools and businesses in the chosen collection area providing them with information to help to reduce their waste.

2(3) PCSO Vince Clarkson gave the Community Police Officer's Report to the

meeting

Reported Crimes

There have been no reported crimes in the Parish of Occold since the last report on 5th July 2010.

Bogus Callers/Distracted Burglaries

Since week commencing 9th August there has been a number of distraction burglaries in the Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Newmarket, Halesworth and Hitcham areas. Although mentioned in our last report to you we think it is worthwhile bringing this to your attention once again. Our advice is:-

When someone calls: -

Do close and lock the BACK door and remove the key before answering the front door.

Do put the door chain on BEFORE opening the FRONT door.

Do ask for identification from the caller and ask them to pass it through the gap without removing the chain.

Do close the door whilst checking the identification carefully. A genuine caller will not mind waiting outside whilst this is carried out.

Do ask them to come back another day when you can have a friend or relative available.

Do get three quotes. Ask friends and family for recommended traders.

Do call police on 999 if suspicions are raised. Police take these incidents very seriously and it is no trouble to them.

Don't believe all callers are genuine.

Don't allow anyone in if you are at all unsure

Don't believe scare stories or be pressurised into a cash or quick sale.

Don't have work done to your home until you have taken alternative advice.

Don't keep large amounts of cash in the house

Don't buy or sell anything at the door.

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION OR ARE SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING REPORT IT ON 01473 613500 and IF YOU THINK A CRIME IS BEING COMMITTED ALWAYS DIAL 999

Theft of Trailers

There have been a number of trailers stolen across Suffolk recently and we would urge all owners of such equipment to ensure they are secured when not in use. The marking of such equipment and the recording of identification numbers is essential in assisting recovery.

Neighbourhood Watch

We are always seeking additional co-ordinators for Neighbourhood Watch and ask that if anyone is interested in becoming involved they contact one of us at Debenham.

Safe and Secure

Suffolk Constabulary in conjunction with Mid Suffolk District Council, Crime Prevention Panel and the Western Suffolk Crime Prevention Panel are promoting **“Safe and Secure in Mid Suffolk”**.

The scheme provides FREE home security upgrade for homeowners and private tenants living in Mid Suffolk who are:

- 60 and over OR
- receiving income related benefit OR
- Disabled
- Discounts are available for other householders.

Security measures are professionally installed by scheme approved contractor to a specification recommended by Suffolk Police:-

- Door Locks Chains and Viewers.
- Window Locks
- Smoke Detectors
- Shed security
- Electronic Timer Switches.

For further information telephone:- 0845 606 6067

Have Your Say

The Community Priority Setting Meeting is now open to the public and is where our priorities for the following month will be set, please come along and raise any issues. The next meeting is on **29th September**, at The Old School Rooms, Old Market Street, Mendlesham. IP14 5SA.

This meeting starts at 7.00pm and finishes at 8pm. All members of the Parish Council as well as the public are invited to attend when they can bring any issues/concerns to the meeting's attention.

Please contact us to find out when later meetings are, alternatively the information is on our website.

New Team Member

On Monday 9th August Sally Fray joined the Safer Neighbourhood team here at Debenham as a Police Community Support Officer and will be working to provide our services to the Communities of the Mid Suffolk Central region. Occold is one of her Parishes and she looks forward to meeting members of the community.

Quality of service

If you would like to tell us your views on the service that you have received from us or just to say how nice it is to see a Police Officer in your village, please let us know. We appreciate all feedback & comments from residents within our SNT area.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 5th July 2010, which had previously been circulated to Councillors, were approved

4. Matters Arising

4(1) Item 4(1) 5.7.2010: Register of Interests

The Clerk confirmed that she had written to the Monitoring Officer advising him of the charity memberships of various Councillors and that the Register of Interests had been updated

4(2) Item 5(2) 5.7.2010: Bus stop

The trees had been removed from the green on 25th August although there would need to be further work done to level the area before any construction work could go ahead. See Finance 9(2) below

4(3) Item 8(1) 5.7.2010: Open Meeting and noise issues at village hall

Mr Hubner reported that a meeting had been held earlier that day between ORAC and officers from Mid Suffolk District Council. There were plans to put acoustic housings on the outside of the heat extractor fans and sound deadening material on the interior of the hall to reduce noise emission from the building. It is hoped that costs will be met from the retainer not yet paid to the builders. ORAC would be seeking a variation to the terms of both the planning permission and the licensing agreement. MSDC have agreed to alter the terms of the Noise Abatement Notice to make it less restrictive

5. Correspondence

5(1) Correspondence for circulation – SCC leaflet about Trusted Trader Scheme; Councillor Handbook for 2011 Census; information from EDF Energy via SALC about closure of Sizewell B; *Clerks & Councils Direct* September 2010; letter from Stowmarket Town Council about investment in the town; minutes of the police tasking meeting held in June at Creting St Mary; *Suffolk View* Summer 2010; *The Local Councillor* Issue 3 2010; Mid Suffolk District Council Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10; minutes of Mid Suffolk North meeting of SALC held on 9th June; SALC Report to Area Meetings August/September 2010; LAIS Up2Date summaries; LAIS bulletins on *Structural Reform Plans: Localism, Structural Reform Plans: Political, Affordable Housing Report, State of the Countryside 2010, Big Society, Liberating the NHS, Community Right to Build, Council Tax Referendums* and *Reconnecting police and the people*; *Policing Suffolk* newsletter September 2010; Mid Suffolk LDF newsletter August 2010; *REPortage* (Inspire East) newsletter Summer 2010; SALC Survey of Public Services; Mid Suffolk Licensing Policy

5(2) The Clerk read out a letter from Suffolk Trading Standards warning about doorstep traders offering to buy gold and jewellery

5(3) An email had been received from Suffolk Registration Service about modernisation proposals. Councillors expressed support for the proposed changes

5(4) Information had been received from SALC about Referendums on Local Council Precepts. If this legislation comes into force it will mean that Parish Councils wishing to exceed the precept cap that is set for them will be required to hold, and pay for, a referendum in the Parish to demonstrate support for the increased amount

5(5) A letter had been received from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils about possible integration and the various options under consideration

5(6) A letter from Mid Suffolk Waste and Environmental Services about Dog Fouling campaign was read out

5(7) The Parish Council had been asked to comment on the Tri-ennial review of Mid Suffolk's Licensing Policy (comments due by 25th October). The document was placed in the bundle for circulation. To be considered at next month's meeting (Also to consider responses to SALC Survey of Public Services)

5(8) Information had been received about the SALC Newsletter of the Year 2010 competition. It was agreed that Oracle should be entered again

6. Parish Paths Partnership

6(1) Mr Owen reported that there had been a near accident recently when two boys on bicycles had almost collided with a tractor on the lane near Occold Hall, which is a Public Footpath, not a Bridleway. He asked if a sign could be put up on the fingerpost reminding users of the path that it is for pedestrians only. Clerk to contact SCC Rights of Way department

6(2) There has still been no response to the request for a volunteer to take the job of footpaths warden. Clerk to put a request in Oracle again and also mention the fact that footpaths are for pedestrians not bicycles or horses

6(3) The footpath sign on the B1077 onto Church Farm land has been broken. The FP sign at Redlingfield Road is also still missing. A sign from Clint Road was found in the ditch and has been stored at Occold Hall. Clerk to contact SCC ROW

7. Planning Matters

7(1) PA1557/10 Land adjacent to 1 Redlingfield Road: Detached single-storey dwelling – it was noted that the application has been withdrawn

7(2) PA0265/10 Ash Tree Farm Benningham Green: Conversion and extension of barn to form dwelling unit... – it was noted that permission has been granted

7(3) PA1473/10 Land south of Beaconsfield Arms: Two and a half storey dwelling –it was noted that permission had been refused

7(4) PA0724/10 Land alongside A140, Eye: Erection of two wind turbines, etc – it was noted that permission has been granted

7(5) PA241310 16 Old Rectory Gardens: Work to Lime Tree – work has already been carried out

7(6) PA2217/10 The Beeches, The Street: Replacement of External front door (Listed Buildings Consent)

Mr Hubner declared a prejudicial interest as applicant and left the room. All other

Councillors declared a personal interest

The Clerk explained that the new door would be almost the same as the existing one except with two vertical glass panels instead of six panes of glass. Councillors were happy to support the application

8. Meetings and Training

8(1) Mid Suffolk District Council Parish Liaison Meeting Thursday 7th October (morning or evening session) No-one was able to attend

8(2) Village Groups Meeting 20th September at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Various Councillors would be attending in other capacities so would be able to report back to the meeting in October

8(3) Active @ 60 smart card evaluation meeting at Eye Community Centre 10.30am -2pm (lunch provided) Thursday 30th September

9. Finance

9(1) Submitted for payment an invoice from Suffolk County Council for street light supply and maintenance for period 1.4.2010 to 30.9.2010 of £357.26 + £62.52VAT= £419.78. Approved.

Information had been supplied about the discontinuation of MBFU lamp manufacture. Eventually the lanterns will have to be replaced as there is not an alternative lamp that can be used in the existing ones. This will have to be budgeted for next year. AT present the new lanterns cost £199 each and we have 14 lanterns. The schedule accompanying the invoice lists 6 of Occold's 14 lanterns as being non-compliant with G39/1 requirements, whereas in the opinion of the representative from Morgan Est only two fall into this category. It was suggested that this be raised with SCC now to clarify before a situation arises where they refuse to carry out repairs to a failed light

9(2) Submitted for payment an invoice from Waveney Tree Specialists for removal of trees on village green for £200 + £35 VAT = £235. Approved. Clerk to query why elm only removed to a certain height

9(3) Submitted for payment renewal of insurance policy at a cost of £298.12 (or £283.92 if a 3-year long term agreement is made). As the 3 year agreement fixes the insurance rate at this year's level the premium will only increase due to the index-linked increase in the value of the assets over the next three years. It was agreed that this was probably worth doing as rates are likely to increase in future

9(4) It was noted that the audit for year ended 30th March 2010 had been satisfactorily completed

9(5) An appeal had been received from Vitalise for a donation to funds. Clerk to send usual acknowledgement

10. Matters to be advised (at the Chairman's discretion)

10(1) It was noted that the bottle banks were overflowing at the village hall. It was reported that there had been a problem in getting the contractor out to empty them this

time [*NB Bottle banks were emptied the morning following this meeting!*]

10(2) It was reported that vehicles are travelling at dangerously high speeds along the stretch of the B1077 outside Occold Hall and the junction with Barrack Lane. As farm vehicles have to exit onto this part of the road it is causing a problem. Mr Owen, having outlined the problem, declared a prejudicial interest and left the room. It was considered whether a speed limit should be applied here. First action would be to contact SCC to put up some speed monitors to collect data on the vehicles using the road. Clerk to contact Brian Lomax

11. Date of next meeting is Monday 11th October 2010 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed 9.25pm