

GAZELEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on
Tuesday 14th February 2017 in Gazeley Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Judy Moatt (Chairman), Cllr Hilary Appleton, Cllr Charlene Vandenbroucke,
Cllr Martin Hooker and Cllr Tom Morgan.

In attendance: Lynne Francis (Clerk) and 14 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr John Chambers

	The meeting opened at 7.30pm
17/2.1	Apologies: Cllr John Chambers had sent apologies as he had to attend another meeting. It was noted that Cllr Kevin Grimwood was in hospital and therefore unable to attend.
17/2.2	Declarations of Interest in matters on the agenda: None declared
17/2.3	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2017. The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
17/2.4	<p>Reports from external bodies:</p> <p>1. County Councillor's Report: The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>2. District Councillor's Report: Cllr Rona Burt had met with members of the Parish Council last week to discuss on-going problems with the forge on the village green. She had no further updates in respect of Hatchfield Farm, the Mildenhall Airbase or the Local Plan Consultation.</p> <p>3. Safer Neighbourhood Team: There had been no recent recorded crime in this village but the Clerk noted that, according to the latest newsletter for the Mildenhall area as a whole, the highest incidences of recorded crime were for unsocial behaviour, violence and sexual offences and criminal damage and arson.</p>
17/2.5	<p>Finance</p> <p>Approval of payments: The Clerk presented payments for authorisation.</p> <p>Decision – One payment totalling £64.00 was authorised and the cheque was signed. (Report attached)</p>
17/2.6	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>The Clerk, noting that several misinformed, misleading and unfair comments with regard to the Parish Council had been posted on the village Facebook site in recent weeks, gave a full report on the current situation with the various issues that had been raised.</p> <p>1. Mill Meadow PRU. The school has not yet formally closed although the staff and pupils have been relocated elsewhere in Suffolk. Suffolk County Council's cabinet recommended closure to The Secretary of State following a meeting on 24th January. The property team will be responsible for maintaining the safety and the security of the site until its future is decided.</p> <p>2. Section 106. A question had been asked about the Section 106 payments in connection with the development at Sperrinks nursery. The Clerk confirmed that £3,500 had been allotted for the upgrading of the two bus stops serving the development, one on The Street and the other on Higham Road. A sum of £60,995 had been awarded to Moulton CEVC Primary School whose catchment area includes Gazeley. Full details are on the West Suffolk website.</p> <p>3. Speed Indication Device (SID). The SID has now been installed. The siting of the posts which hold the device has been determined by criteria laid down by Suffolk County Council.</p>

	<p>One post is opposite the school and the other one is in the middle of the village, near the church. The Parish Council will be considering other suitable sites to accommodate the SID. Contrary to popular belief, there are stringent rules about the siting of speed devices like sleeping policemen and speed signs and it is not always possible to do as we would wish.</p> <p>4. The Blacksmith's Shop, or forge. The owner has been served with a Section 215 Notice which requires him to repair the corner of the building and remove the metal fencing surrounding it within the next six months.</p> <p>5. No 50 The Street. Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of the building. A previous application for development of the site included a plan to convert the original house into two separate dwellings and this was approved by the Parish Council. The current developers subsequently applied to demolish the house and replace it with two new houses. The Parish Council asked that if permission were to be given for demolition then the two new houses which face the road should be of a similar style and material to the original building. The Parish Council has just been informed that the developers have acceded to their request.</p> <p>Following the Clerk's Report, Cllr Vandenbroucke asked if she could enlarge on the report with regard to the SID as she had taken responsibility for the organisation and installation of the device. She explained again about the restrictions on the siting of the equipment and that the Parish Council had been given no choice in the matter.</p>
17/2.7	<p>Planning – With regard to No. 50 The Street, Cllr Appleton reported that she had attended the meeting as a resident of the village, not as a representative of the Parish Council, in order to challenge a decision to demolish the building. Although it is not a listed building, it is of considerable interest to residents as it was a former pub and a village shop for many years. She noted that the agent for the developers had not been allowed to speak at the meeting but the Clerk confirmed that the planning officers had asked for a reiteration of the Parish Council's position on the application, in order to pass that on to the agent, and this had been done. Following the decision to approve the application, the agent had subsequently forwarded an artist's impression of the new design which was shown to the members of the public who were present at the meeting.</p>
17/2.8	<p>Civic Pride Award – Cllr Martin Hooker had produced a draft nomination form at the last meeting, asking for comments for improvement or adjustment. Cllr Appleton asked that acronyms be kept to a minimum as Gazeley Parish Council had been abbreviated to GPC in several places on the form. Cllr Hooker agreed to do this where possible.</p> <p>Decision: To adopt the Civic Pride Award form with the requested adjustments. Proposed: Cllr Appleton, Seconded, Cllr Vandenbroucke. It was suggested that details of the award be given in the next newsletter.</p>
17/2.9	<p>Village Enhancement Scheme – Cllr Hooker had also produced a draft nomination form for anyone wishing to join a working party to make improvements to the village scene. He felt that it was very important to ensure that any improvements to the village were maintained and that members of a working party took formal ownership of the project.</p> <p>Decision: To adopt the Village Enhancement Scheme. Proposed: Cllr Judy Moatt, Seconded, Cllr Tom Morgan.</p>
17/2.10	<p>Annual Playground Inspection Report – The report had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Morgan noted that it was very much the same as last year's report including a mention of the absence of drop bolts on the gate to the children's' play</p>

	<p>area which were in fact in place at the time of both reports. Cllr Morgan confirmed that arrangements for PlayMaintain to carry out repair and maintenance works, identified last year, were in hand but a date for the work to be carried out had not yet been agreed. Comments were made about the large amount of molehills on the field.</p>
17/2.11	<p>Councillor Training – The Clerk had received a list of training courses for councillors from SALC. It was agreed that councillors would contact the Clerk and notify her of which dates would suit them best so that places could be reserved.</p>
17/2.12	<p>Councillors' Reports</p> <p>Cllr Vandembroucke asked if she could make a personal statement: She said that she had been, and still was, very upset about some of the negative comments made towards the Parish Council on the Community Facebook site. Some of the comments had clearly shown a lack of respect and confidence in the Parish Council which was very upsetting. She had been particularly upset by remarks made about the SID as she had taken personal responsibility for arranging for the device to be installed and regarded it as a positive achievement and yet it had been met with a series of negative comments. Some of the comments had insinuated that the members of the Parish Council were not doing their job properly and as members of the public at the meeting had seen, this was not the case. She confirmed that the powers of a Parish Council are limited and councillors suffered the same frustration as residents when things didn't move along as quickly as they would hope but other agencies were involved like Suffolk County Council and Forest Heath District Council. Obviously the councillors are residents too and therefore have a particular interest in getting things done. On another matter, Cllr Vandembroucke referred to comments regarding the setting up of a Community Speedwatch group. Six volunteers are required and this is organised via Suffolk Police. Perhaps a mention of this could be made in the next newsletter.</p> <p>Cllr Hooker – The kissing gates on land at the rear of Tithe Close need refurbishing. He also asked about arrangements for the maintenance of the pond. The Clerk confirmed that she was waiting for a quotation from S.P. Landscapes, along with their quotation for grass cutting for this year.</p> <p>Cllr Morgan – The roads around the Highwood estate are getting worse with more potholes appearing. He noted that main roads are a priority but it is frustrating when workmen arrive, repair a couple of holes and then disappear again. It was agreed that it was because they deal with them in order of size and not by vicinity. A pothole in Stubbins Lane is particularly bad now. The Clerk will contact the council again.</p> <p>There were no further comments from members of the Parish Council.</p> <p>The Next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm in Gazeley Village Hall on Tuesday 14th March 2017.</p>
	<p>PUBLIC FORUM</p> <p>Many of the issues mentioned in the Clerk's Report were again raised by members of the public. There is a general feeling of frustration that the village is now lacking many of the facilities that were here in the past. A comment was made that the Parish Council is only the mouth-piece of the Forest Heath District Council and Suffolk County Council but this was robustly rebutted by a member of the Parish Council and an apology was given. The Clerk noted that facilities such as the school and the shop had closed because they</p>

	<p>were not used enough to make them viable at the time of closure. In particular when the school had closed, only 17 of the 50 children in the catchment area were attending the school. This was because, for various reasons, parents had chosen to send their children to different schools in the area and as a result it had been very difficult to justify keeping the school open and it had become more and more difficult to retain good staff. The Chequers had been sold because Greene King had never been able to make a profit from it.</p> <p>The subject of potholes was raised again. The suggestion was made that the Parish Council wasn't as vigilant as it should be in reporting the potholes. Cllr Appleton suggested that members of the public become more proactive and report the potholes themselves in addition to the reports that are filed by the Parish Council. This also applied to lighting outages. It is very simple to send reports to the County Council via the council's website where the progress of repairs can also be checked.</p> <p>It was agreed that details will be given in the next newsletter.</p> <p>Following mention of the possible closure of the PRU, Churchwarden Mr Simon Gash outlined the history of the school in Gazeley. He confirmed that if a decision was eventually taken to sell the site, then any sums due to the charitable trust which was a part owner of the site would probably be fairly small and there would be limits to what the Trustees could do with it. The trust is not connected to All Saints' Church.</p> <p>Complaints were received about the number of vehicles that were regularly parked around No.1 Highwood Court, a bungalow in the sheltered housing unit which is run by Flagship Housing. It was alleged that mechanical repairs were being carried out on site and it was therefore being used as a business premises. The Clerk confirmed that following a series of earlier complaints, she had contacted Flagship Housing but had so far received no response.</p>
	There were no further comments from members of the public and the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Clerk's Finance Report – February 2017

Payments	£	Bank Balances
Newprint Ltd	£64.00	
Receipts		
Interest	£ 0.51	
Treasurer's Account		£ 4647.06
Instant Access Account		£11964.57
Total Balance		£16,611.63

Agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman. 14.3.17.