

CROWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 9th March 2015 at 7.00pm in the Morris Room of the village hall.

PRESENT: D Brander, Chairman; Councillors Baker, Hart, Scott, Shoote, Ross Williamson, Roger Williamson, L Rowe, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE County Councillor M Hicks.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from District Councillor T Passmore; Suffolk Police

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING held on January 12th 2015 were read, agreed and signed as a true record after one alteration. 'quote' changed to 'estimate'.

MATTERS ARISING

CHOPPINS HILL The hedge had now been cut.

SCC. Highways are now aware that a 30mph repeater sign had been removed in Debenham Road.

Village Hall & Play Area

It was reported that surveys had been distributed to each home in the village to ascertain views on improvements to the play area. The survey could be completed on line or delivered to Sarah Scott. The information from the survey would allow three potential improvement plans to be prepared for consideration by villagers.

To clarify responsibilities regarding the village hall and recreation ground it was agreed that the following wording would be included on the Parish Council website,

"The parish council is the custodial trustee of the Village Hall and Recreation Ground but is not responsible for the management of these facilities. The Village Hall Management Committee are the managing trustees".

Stonham Barns

A liaison group has yet to be established. Stonham Aspal Parish Council are not convinced of its value but Stonham Barns preference is for meetings involving all groups. MSDC have appointed a community officer (Jonathan Free) to establish the terms of reference if such a group were created. Alan Shoote will represent Crowfield PC and Charles Williamson Crowfield residents.

We were promised a letter from MSDC CEO covering the detail of how they viewed the relationship between licensing and planning restrictions. This is important to residents in proximity to Stonham Barns as late night events are restricted to three events a year by planning but could be sixty a year per licensing. We have not received the promised letter.

DECISION:

It was agreed to write the following letter to the chief planning officer at Mid Suffolk DC with a copy to Jonathan Free.

Crowfield residents in proximity to Stonham Barns remain concerned about noise levels particularly after 9.00 pm. The frequency of late night events are limited to three per year by application ref. 655/02, and appeal ref. APP/W3520/A/03/1113418. Could you confirm that these restrictions are and will remain applicable to the entire Stonham Barns complex. From the perspective of nearby residents the noise nuisance is similar regardless of the point from which it emanates.

REASON To protect residents from any noise caused by an increase in number of late night events.

Transparency Code

SALC have informed the clerk that as a result of a change in the law the agenda can now be transmitted electronically. Councillors can choose how they wish to receive the agenda
A discussion took place regarding the governments direction that draft minutes should be placed on a website which is available to the public within 30 days of a meeting. The meeting felt that this would be inconvenient for councillors whilst being of little benefit to residents.
We are also waiting to hear from SALC regarding detail of the revised audit, financial and other disclosures to be made on a website.

DECISION:

Draft minutes would be produced within 14 days of a meeting to facilitate inclusion on a public website within 30 days.

REASON

To comply with the governments directive.

Speeding Enforcement & VAS

Speeding Enforcement

It was noted that PCSO Edward Wright had obtained a confirmation from the Suffolk Speed Unit that they will make visits to Crowfield to enforce speeding restrictions. It is not known when this will be done or exactly where they will be positioned.

VAS Update

A meeting was held in the village with Suffolk County Highways to discuss locations for the VAS. We were informed that:

SCC have rights over the land next to the highway and do not need a letter from landowners to situate a VAS sign.

A sign cannot be placed within 200 metres of the 30mph limit.

A sign must be clearly visible for 100 metres when approaching it.

Placing the sign in open countryside (including within the 30 mph zone) is ineffectual.

These rules have been determined by reference to safety, the operating needs of the sign and the likely effectiveness.

Each of the village locations were visited and the outcomes were:

Debenham Road:

There is a slight bend in the road just south of the Church Road junction.

The sign could not be placed before Church road because of the 200 metre rule.

It would have to be a least 100 metres south of the slight bend in the road.

The northern most suitable location is just north of Autumn Cottage at the field entrance.

Ipswich Road:

The only acceptable location that would give benefit to the line of houses is adjacent to "The Paddock".

Gosbeck PC have commented that it would be better to have the sign before the line of houses but SCC will not do that because of a bend in the road.

Stone Street:

The only location that meets SCC criteria is near the south side of the drive of Pear Tree Farm.

South of that position was either within the 200 meter rule or not visible for 100 meters.

VAS Next Steps

Councillor Passmore would be contacted to determine the process for obtaining financial support.

SCC have requested that a revised application form be submitted defining the three agreed locations. The clerk had the necessary information and would submit the required form.

SCC also require the parish council to sign a memorandum agreement outlining the responsibilities of both parties. Copies of the agreement were distributed to the meeting.

DECISION:

The meeting consented to the agreement being signed and forwarded it to SCC.

REASON:

To progress the purchase of a vehicle activated sign intended to deter speeding in the village.

VAS Hemingstone

Contact had been made by the Clerk of Hemingstone parish council informing us that they also had a speeding problem. Hemingstone wished to know if it would be possible to share a sign with Crowfield.

DECISION: It was decided to let Hemingstone know that until the process of approval and acquisition had progressed further it was not possible to say if the sign would be fully utilised.

REASON:

To keep open all options until more information was available.

REPORT FROM CLLR. HICKS Cllr Hicks gave a short informative report (on file).

Annual Parish Meeting. To follow same format as previous year.

Correspondence

ANGLIAN WATER had replied concerning the problem of sewerage flooding from drains. Further remedial action to clear the drains would be undertaken by them in the near future.

PENSION. A letter had been received from the pension regulator concerning employers' statutory obligations regarding pensions. The letter did not explain these but did threaten fines and prosecution for non-compliance. The immediate deadline (31st March 2015) required the appointment of a contact person for the pension regulator. It was agreed to reply that the clerk would be the contact person.

SALC would be asked for clarification on the responsibilities of parish councils regarding pensions.

Parish Council Elections – May 2015

Nomination and consent forms must be handed to MSDC at Needham Market by April 9th.

A notice regarding the election will be placed on the parish notice boards.

Finance

CURRENT BANK BALANCES; CA £2365.75 (£68.04 reclaimed vat added) DA £1358.65

CHEQUES AGREED AND SIGNED. 100363 £275.00 L S Rowe clerk's half-year salary.

We have been informed by SALC that central government has decided not to extend automatic referendums to low spending parish councils for year to 31st March 2016.

We have been notified by MSDC that the band D tax charge has increased to £15.04 a 12.14% increase. The precept has increased from £2100 to £2300 a 9.52% increase. We would have expected new housing to have caused the band D percentage increase to be less than the precept increase which happened in 2014. MSDC have been contacted for a reconciliation. No reply to date. Land & Buildings Registration. It was agreed that Councillor Baker would obtain an estimate from a valuer and that this would be circulated to the parish councillors before proceeding. Blocks Solicitors to be asked if they would like the documents back.

Clerk's Salary

The clerk's salary has not changed in four years during which time government requirements have also increased the clerk's work load.

DECISION: It was proposed by Alan Shoote and seconded by Ross Williamson that the clerks salary be increased by £50 to £600 effective from 1st April 2015.

REASON: To reflect the increased workload and to maintain the clerk's salary at a competitive rate.

Planning

Home Farm 4015/14

Councillors Ross Williamson and Roger Williamson declared an interest.

The PC did not object but requested two restrictions:

Use be restricted to agricultural purposes.

A period of mandatory vacancy each year.

Current Status: No Decision

HS Hall Church Road – 0006/15

This was the renewal of an application previously approved by MSDC.

No objection by PC

Current Status: Approved by MSDC

The Gables – 0366/15

Councillor Scott declared an interest.

No objection by PC

Current Status: Approved by MSDC

Any other business

A theft of diesel had taken place from a vehicle parked in a field. A vehicle registration number taken at the scene enabled the police to trace and prosecute the offenders.

Date of Next Meeting May 18th 2015

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.45pm.