



Wickham Skeith Parish Council

MINUTES of PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held **MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2017** at **WICKHAM SKEITH VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs P Wright (Chair), N Merriam, B Kemp, M Blair, K Knights, H Bowes, T Goodacre (Clerk), Cllr A Stringer (MSDC and SCC) and 2 members of the public

Apologies: Accepted from Cllr Bloor

1. Chair's Welcome: The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming everyone in attendance.
2. Declaration of Interest: None received.
3. Minutes of Meeting held 9 January 2017: The Minutes were approved by all Councillors and signed by the Chair. Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting held 27 February 2017: The Minutes were approved by all Councillors and signed by the Chair.
4. Village Forum: No matters raised.
5. Reports:
 - 5.1. Cllr Stringer (SCC)
 - Highway Issues: SCC has supported extension of Civil Parking Enforcement across Suffolk. Enforcement will now be transferred from Police to consortium of local councils.
 - NHS Amnesty: SCC and NHS working together to ensure equipment is being returned (crutches, walking frames, mattresses etc). For those unable to drop off at Medequip collection points, Medequip will collect for free – contact 01473 351805.
 - Budget: SCC now having to pay for Adult Social Care so setting budget was difficult. A 3% rise in council tax was agreed and a £300,000 reduction in Highways Budget was also agreed.
 - Litter Pick: Wickham Skeith's litter pick will be on 18.03.17, meeting at the Village Hall at 10.00 am – all welcome.
 - 5.2. Cllr Stringer (MSDC)
 - Mid Suffolk Leisure but County Sites: MSDC have now secured 3 redevelopment sites from SCC using their reserves (2 middle school sites in Needham Market/Stowmarket and Paddock House in Eye). This move is not being funded from £25M borrowing that MSDC agreed to borrow in "profit for purpose" initiative so it is being argued that this money should be used to deliver housing schemes, achieving financial return.
 - MSDC Budgets: Net budget of £9.958M has been agreed, with no cuts to services (similar to last year). Reserves known as Transformation Funds have increased to £9.2M, with majority of funds coming from New Homes Bonus, payable per new home built or empty dwelling brought back into use. Council House Rents to be reduced by 1% (in line with Government policy), but increase in garage rents and sheltered housing charges. It is felt that the policy is restricting build-up of capital fund to maintain/build more council stock.
 - Neighbourhood Plans: Mendlesham's Neighbourhood Plan has now passed public referendum (first plan in Mid Suffolk).
 - Change in Governance: MSDC agreed to move from Committee Based Governance Model to Leader Cabinet, meaning that elected members making policy decisions will be appointed by leader of Council and from one political group, instead of current Executive Model made up of elected members.
 - Car Parking Enforcement: MSDC approached by Police regarding enforcement of on-street parking. MSDC have agreed and will employ both on-street and off-street Parking Enforcement Officers.
 - 5.3. Suffolk Police (via Parish Clerk): No crimes have been reported in the village since last report.
 - 5.4. Parish Clerk:
 - Transparency Fund: Following advice from SALC, Extraordinary Meeting held on 27.02.17 to complete Application Form and submit to SALC prior to deadline of 9.03.17.
 - Signposts: New signpost requested at junction of Wickham Road/Broadway following hedging maintenance revealing condition of post. Clerk to also report fallen sign along Wickham Road and missing half of entrance sign to Wickham Skeith.
 - 5.5. Parish Councillors:
 - Cllr Knights commented on possible federation of Thorndon Primary School with Worlingworth, which may affect the Stradbroke pyramid and oversubscriptions to Hartismere School.
 - The possibility of planting a Community Orchard (minimum of 6 trees) on the Little Green was discussed to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Sapphire Jubilee/Centenary of End of WWI. Cllr Stringer to forward email giving advice and information to be included in village newsletter.

6. Correspondence Received:
- 6.1. Section 137: SALC have advised that 2017/18 Expenditure Limit for Parish Councils is £7.57.
 - 6.2. Anglia Level Crossings: Network Rail have advised that Paynes Level Crossing (S17), located on Gislingham's Parish Footpath 22 is to be closed, extinguishing Footpath 22 between Footpath 26 and Footpath 4, diverting users to the adjacent bridge to the North. Clerk to update Website Co-ordinator for publication.
 - 6.3. All correspondence which has not been circulated via email included within Agenda Items or in Circulation File.
7. Finance:
- 7.1. Accounts as at 28 February 2017 were presented by Cllr Kemp showing a balance of £2,933.68. It was noted that the recent Council Tax Bills illustrate increase in Parish Precept (from £2,200 to £2,400) which has not been increased since 2009. The possibility of an annual increase was discussed.
 - 7.2. Cllr Kemp advised that R Bassett has kindly agreed to carry out Internal Audit.
 - 7.3. Internal Accounts Audit and Control Review 2016/17: Following review by Cllr Kemp, updated Audit circulated to all Councillors. This update was approved by all Councillors.
 - 7.4. Pensions Regulator: Cllr Kemp advised that Parish Councils are obliged to offer pension provision to Parish Clerks and that he would be putting this in writing.
 - 7.5. The following invoices/expenses were agreed for payment:
 - Cllr Wright (reimbursement for BT) @ £40.68
BT have now confirmed that Direct Debit now set up, enabling bills to now be automatically settled. It was agreed with Cllr Stringer to apply for funding once fees reach £500.
 - Parish Clerk's Expenses @ £76.14
 - M Downard – Village Green Grass Cutting @ £600.00 inc VAT
8. Planning Matters: No applications/notifications received.
9. Village Green/Working Party: Working party conducted on 11/02/17 on corner of Rose Lane/Village Green. Thanks were given to M Downard for kindly trimming around Gimmer/Village Green.
10. Matters for next Agenda and Any Other Business: 2016/17 Annual Accounts, Removal of Poles on Village Green
11. Next Meeting: 8 May 2017 (to include Annual Parish Meeting and Parish Council AGM).

Meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Wickham Skeith Parish Council

Chair:	Paul Wright	07921 292233	Parish Councillors:	Kevin Knights	01449 767708
Treasurer:	Barry Kemp	01449 766813		Brian Bloor	01449 766633
Vice Chair:	Nigel Merriam	01449 766222		Harriet Bowes	01449 766708
Parish Clerk:	Tara Goodacre	01449 768696		Michael Blair	01449 766640