

Wednesday 3rd March 2021 - ZOOM Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

Present: J Miller (Chair), M Clements (Vice-Chair), K Goudy, Cllr M Helliwell, K Baker, M Reeve, K Hall-Price (Clerk), District Cllr K Welham, District Cllr R Eburne, County Cllr A Stringer and 4 members of the public. Cllr W Ratcliffe arrived late at 19.59hrs.

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the March 2021 parish council meeting using the Zoom forum. Cllr James Harbidge has submitted his apologies.
2. **Co-Option – Cllr Vacancy:** Nicola Hardman has volunteered to fill the current vacancy on the Old Newton with Dagworth and Gipping Parish Council. Having been a resident within Old Newton for just over 20 years but has lived in Mid Suffolk since her father moved her family down from Lancashire when she was 9. She is a Project Control Manager and Business Analyst by trade, and currently works full-time in Cambridge. This, coupled with the fact that she has been working from home for the past 11 months, means she possesses a good level of computer literacy, a familiarity with conducting and participating in virtual meetings, experienced in working as part of a team and is numerate, computer literate and logical. She has always been impressed by the level of community that exists in Old Newton and has been contemplating for some time how she could contribute more to village life – being neither a parent nor overly into group sports, joining the Parish Council seemed the obvious choice. She has taken time to consider her application, (thus not applying when first advertised the vacancy) and has tried to gain an understanding of what would be required through speaking with the Parish Clerk and attending a Parish Council meeting and believes that this would allow her to utilise her skills and give back to the community she so enjoys living in.

Nicola was asked if she minded waiting in the virtual waiting room whilst Cllrs had the opportunity to discuss the co-option position. Cllrs felt that Nicola has availability to commit time and knowledge to the role of a Cllr, will bring fresh and new ideas, is computer literate – may offer a different perspective to the role of a Cllr. Cllr Clements proposed to accept with immediate effect for co-option, seconded by Cllr Baker. All Cllrs unanimously were in favour. Nicola was accepted back into the virtual meeting and the Chairman welcomed Nicola to the parish council as a Cllr. Clerk confirmed that the declaration of interests and any other signatory forms will be forwarded after the meeting for signature and submission to MSDC.

3. **Dispensations:**
 - a) To consider any requests for dispensations – No new requests received.
 - b) To note existing dispensations. The standing dispensation for Cllr Clements in respect of the proposed development land between Silver Street and Finningham Road and Cllr Reeve in respect of the proposed development of the Greenacres Site.
4. **To receive any declarations of personal/prejudicial interest.**
 - **Cllr Baker declared an interest due to family connections and Cllr Harbidge declared an interest due to being a neighbour in DC/21/00717** | Full Planning Application - Conversion of and extension to barn to form 1No dwelling house (following demolition of existing structures); Erection of detached 3 bay cart lodge garaging. Installation of package sewage treatment plant. & **DC/21/00718** | Application for Listed Building Consent - Works to facilitate conversion of and extension to barn to form 1No dwelling house (following demolition of existing structures).| Barn North Of Hill Farm School Road Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4PJ.
 - **Cllr Reeve – Declared an interest on the grass cutting agenda item 15.**
5. **To approve the minutes of the meetings as true and accurate records.**
 - February Full Parish Council Meeting on 3rd February 2021, proposed by Cllr Goudy seconded by Cllr Helliwell. All Cllrs in favour – Minutes approved as a true and accurate record. The minutes will be signed accordingly by the Chairman at the next available opportunity.
6. **Clerks report following February meeting.**
 - Crier submission has been issued for the March edition, the Clerk continues to include up to date government information uploaded onto the village website.

- The village website has been updated to include all minutes and information approved. There is also a new event listed for the open gardens event in the village on the weekend of 12th & 13th June 2021 and a libraries event called Skullduggery in Stowmarket has also been published on the events page.
- RTI and Nest Pension submissions were completed. The clerk in error submitted the previous months submission which resulted in an underpayment for the current month. An additional payment of £9.86 was made to make up the shortfall and the actual total amount paid is the amount approved of £72.71.
- Clerk has set up virtual meetings on Zoom with all Cllrs now able to access the meetings.
- Planning Responses were issued to MSDC following the meeting by the deadlines set.
- An additional planning application has come in for DC/21/01195 | Householder Planning Application - Erection of two storey side extension and single-story rear extension (following demolition of conservatory). | 5 Church Road Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4ED. Comments requested by MSDC by 23.03.21 which is 2 weeks before the April meeting, so an extension is unlikely to be approved. An additional planning meeting will need to be scheduled.
- Remote meetings - NALC is continuing to work with a range of national bodies, including the Local Government Association (LGA) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG), to press for the facility to meet remotely to continue after 6th May 2021, there is continuing uncertainty, NALC's advice is that councils should now be preparing for the real possibility of a return to face-to-face meetings. NALC has produced guidance to assist with these preparations which can be found and include risk assessments and social distancing rules that will continue to be in place.
- Salc are currently not running any training to assist with computer literacy and knowledge but will forward any information as it becomes available to the Clerk.
- Craig Mortimer will be issuing the clerk a step-by-step guide on how to set up the parish council email addresses for the new Cllr if co-opted and Cllr Reeve and Cllr Goudy who still need to set up their designated parish council emails.
- Clerk has received street lighting list and expected costs for the period 1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021. Expected invoice includes maintenance, and energy costs total £1,261.86. Clerk has checked the list and is happy the information held is correct. Last years' invoice was for £1,171.45 but the cost of the energy has increased over the last two years and the increase is only being passed on this year. Increase from 14.75 pence per unit to 17.2 pence last year and this year 17.5 pence. Invoice should be submitted for payment in April.

7. Financial Matters & Financial Report

Online banking – All invoices for payment following the February Zoom meeting approval for the January payments were paid through the online BACS system and approved by Cllr Miller on Thursday 4th February 2021.

Bank Account Balances:

- Barclays Statement Balance = **£25,481.86** (26.02.2021).
- Scottish Widows 60 Day account balance = **£3,378.71** (31.12.20)
- Scottish Widows Deposit account = **£253.49** (31.12.20)
- Public Works Loan – Balance outstanding = **£22,246.80** (06.04.2020)

Accounts for payment – February 2021:

EXPENDITURE	CHQ/BACS/SO/DDR		NET	VAT	TOTAL
Karen Price	BACS	Salary less tax, NI, pension plus expenses	£1,098.42		£1,098.42
HMRC PAYE	BACS	Employee NI £33.16, Employer NI £46.41 less employment allowance £46.41	£33.16		£33.16
Nest Pension	DDR	Employee £42.74, Employer £32.06	£74.80		£74.80
PWLB	DDR	Public Works Loan Board	£2,613.62		£2,613.62
Cllr J Miller	BACS	Silver bar for Chain of Office - £15.00/ replacement batteries for banking device £6.01	£21.01		£21.01
RECEIPTS					

Proposed by Cllr Clements and seconded by Cllr Helliwell to be put forward for payment. There is a payment to be made for Cllr Miller so Cllr Goudy will attempt to use the online banking to authorise it. If Cllr Goudy struggles Cllr Miller will approve all the others submitted with the exception of the payment for himself whereby if necessary a cheque will be issued. All Cllrs agreed this was a good compromise.

8. Correspondence Received & Circulars:

- Email received from resident regarding School Hill Highways issues. – To be discussed at item 17 on the agenda.
- Email received from resident regarding Silver Street and Falconer Avenue – To be discussed at item 17 on the agenda.
- Email received regarding request for a supporting letter for new play equipment – To be discussed at item 14 on the agenda.
- BMSDC – Review of leisure, sport and physical activity strategy consultation ends 15.03.21
- Mendlesham Parish Council – consultation Neighbourhood Development Plan – closing on 12th April 2021. Written representation to be sent to Mendlesham Parish Clerk.
- Old Newton resident request to put a couple of slabs down by the post box at Lawes in cotton. Is he allowed to do this to assist as it is extremely muddy for anyone wanting to access/ use the post box. The same resident Also wanted to query the parking on Greenacres to be discussed at item 17 on the agenda.
- Prospective election candidates attending meetings. As we have let one speak, it was agreed to allow any other candidates that approach the Parish Council the same opportunity.

9. To receive District Councillor's Report – Mrs Rachel Eburne / Mr Keith Welham. All Cllrs have received the report prior to the meeting.

Brown bin collection due to be back up and running on 8th March. Discount should have been notified to anyone that pays for their brown bins.

2021/2022 Budget - At the Council meeting on 23 February, the administration put forward budget proposals which they had amended in the run-up to the meeting. In response to the Green and Liberal Democrat alternative budget proposals, the portfolio holder put forward an amendment to his recommendations. The result is that cross-party working groups will be set up to advise on projects to be funded from the additional £4 million allocated for investment in the local economy, housing, communities and wellbeing of residents. The proposal that Council Tax be increased by 1.66% was carried by one vote; this is equivalent to 23p per month for a Band D property. We both spoke against and voted against the increase.

Council House Rents - An increase of £1.25 in Council House rents was agreed by one vote; we both spoke and voted against this increase.

MSDC Financial Report - The latest financial report shows that MSDC incurred additional costs due to Covid of £1.1m and a reduction in income of £950k. All but £138 of these losses has been reimbursed via central government grants. The anticipated total underspend for the current year to the end of March 2021 is £1.8m. The underspend on staff due to unfilled vacancies is £450k. Many key areas of provision of much needed services to our residents are underspent. However, the target for investment in commercial properties across the country is likely to be met despite a huge loss in the value of properties already purchased. The medium-term forecast is that by the end of March 2021 MSDC will have built up a cash surplus of £8m, excluding New Homes Bonus which is expected to be £1.6m in 2020/21.

Housing Revenue Account - The Housing Revenue Account is heading for an underspend of £2.7m in 2020/21. This is almost entirely due to delays in developing new council homes. To keep the underspend as low as possible, a substantial programme of acquisition of homes for rent is being undertaken in the last 3 months of the current financial year.

Brown Street Planning Issue - We were contacted by a resident of Brown Street with a request for information from the planning permission for four homes on Brown Street, just south of Yew Tree Farm. The resident expressed concern over the removal of a hedge in front of one of those properties. A copy of the original outline planning permission dating back to 1991 has been provided to the resident and planning enforcement offices have noted the inquiry. No investigation is currently under way.

Food for Families in need - To help avoid our most in need families going hungry over school half-term, Mid Suffolk District Council have funded food and activities, including a kit to build a bird box. Help will also be given over the Easter school holidays.

Disabled Facilities Grants - The new Independent Living Service started in December 2020 and the whole process of assessment and funding of adaptations to privately owned homes has become much more efficient. If you know of anyone

who is finding living at home difficult and might benefit from adaptations to their home, please let us know. Adaptions to council owned properties are dealt with by the MSDC Housing Management Team.

Solar Carports - MSDC is planning a project to generate electricity from solar panels on car ports constructed over existing car parking spaces on council owned land. The electricity generated could then be used in adjacent council owned buildings. A business case for the project will be considered by Cabinet on 8 March.

10. To receive County Councillor's Report – Mr Andrew Stringer

Suffolk County Council Budget - The Suffolk County Council Budget was voted through Full Council on February 11th. This year's budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which is usually offered. Key points include:

- A council tax rise of 3.99% (1.99% basic council tax and 2% Social Care Precept), representing an increase of £53.55 for a Band D property, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22.
- A council tax shortfall of £7.9m less than expected, to be met by using reserves.
- Planned spending is £597.9m, 7.4% more than 2021-21.
- £15.3m of spending to address ongoing COVID-19 costs.
- No proposed reductions in council services or personnel.

LDGI Group Budget Amendment and Group Leader's Speech - The LDGI Group submitted a Budget Amendment to Full Council on February 11th alongside the administration's Budget. The amendment would have authorised the use of the full 3% social care precept to avoid impacting SCC's reserves and generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household. The extra income would have provided funding for a wider service offer for Suffolk residents, including a new officer for the flooding team to unlock more government funding, and the re-enablement of concessionary bus passes on community transport. The amendment was unfortunately not passed.

Suffolk & Norfolk County Council submit joint bid for £6m flood funding - Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils have submitted a joint bid to the £200 fund for Flood and Coastal Resilience, requesting £6m to invest in flood protection schemes across both counties. The proposed projects would also capture water for reuse. If the bid is successful town and parish councils will be encouraged to get involved through measures like permeable paving, water butts and 'rain gardens' that can cope with occasional flooding. These projects would be in place by 2027 if the bid is approved.

Government's last-minute approach to local authority grants - Suffolk County Council will receive £27m for highways repairs, maintenance and drainage in 2021-22, a reduction in from £31m the previous year. This has necessitated the use of £2m of reserves to top up the grant. In the view of my Group, these cuts in Government funding make it impossible to plan long-term for road maintenance and repair. Due to the uncertainty as to whether this grant would materialise at all, some vital work has already been postponed. "It's a bit like someone telling you that they're going to punch you twice in the face and then expecting you to be grateful if they only punch you once."

LDGI Group submits response to Post-16 Travel Policy consultation - The LDGI Group has submitted a joint response to Suffolk County Council's consultation on the Post-16 Transport Policy, which manages transport to schools and education for young people after the age of 16. The LDGI Group's views included:

- Support for the expansion of the post-16 travel eligibility criteria for sixth form students and adult learners aged 25 and under with EHC plans, reflecting the change in age range for compulsory school attendance.
- Support for keeping prices lower for SEND students.
- Use of buses and trains for school transport must be supported. The needs of students and the numbers currently forced to use taxis or private cars to reach their schools must be taken into account when considering public transport. Students should be steered towards buses first, and the school transport service should support our local bus network in maintaining services to rural areas.
- The Travel Training Scheme must be better funded, so that it can expand and promote its services.
- Grant to the benefice for the sound system that any community group can have access to.

Cllrs asked if Cllr Stringer could look at Wassicks Lane / Old Bells where the lanes are being driven away – Cllr Stringer agreed to look at this following the meeting.

Cllr Baker has taken courage from the letter and correspondence regarding the school issues and will forward any correspondence as its received. School Hill will now be P1 until the water issues can be resolved. District council have come to our rescue twice with providing grit within the hr or request / reporting... Acknowledged that the public service from MSDC received has been superior... The Parish Council acknowledged Cllr Stringer with Cllr Harbidge for their ongoing help with this and gritting by the school.

11. Planning Applications

- **DC/21/00717** | Full Planning Application - Conversion of and extension to barn to form 1No dwelling house (following demolition of existing structures); Erection of detached 3 bay cart lodge garaging. Installation of package sewage treatment plant. & **DC/21/00718** | Application for Listed Building Consent - Works to facilitate conversion of and extension to barn to form 1No dwelling house (following demolition of existing structures).| Barn North Of Hill Farm School Road Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4PJ. *Comments required by 1st March but extension requested and approved to 4th March 2021.*

Cllrs felt that visually it will be an improvement and no objections or comments have been received by the parish council for this application. As it is listed Cllrs are aware that the development will have to be managed sympathetically and heritage will have their own regulations that will need to be adhered to. The original flint building may well be prolonged rather than lost if this application was to be approved. Cllrs felt that this was a good re-purpose of an agricultural building that is no longer fit for purpose. Proposed and seconded to accept this application, with all Cllrs in favour. Application approved at Parish Council level.

- **DC/21/00391** | Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement 3No dormer windows with like for like windows in utile hardwood. | Ivy Cottage Brown Street Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4QB. *Comments required by 14th March 2021.*

No comments have been received directly and Cllrs viewed that the windows were in deed in need of repair /replacement and had no issues with the application. The application was proposed by Cllr Goudy and seconded by Cllr Baker for approval and all Cllrs were unanimously in favour. Application approved at Parish Council level.

- **DC/21/01087** | Householder Application - Erection of a single storey side/rear extension: Erection of rear extension to garage/cartlodge and creation of second floor over to form annexed accommodation ancillary to dwelling. | Mill House Ward Green Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4EZ. *Comments required by 17th March 2021.*

Chair closed the meeting and allowed Mr Ward to speak to the Cllrs. Changes are that there is no longer an upstairs extension and only the single storey kitchen extension. The front of the house will now remain mainly unchanged. The Cart lodge has been shortened / dropped by half a meter in height. There have been no objections received from neighbours, it isn't a listed property or in a conservation area and the scale is now considerably reduced and the balance is now more in line with what objections were made to the first application.

Cllrs comments – Lack of measurements previously did not give Cllrs sufficient information, The rear of the garage is currently out buildings / sheds. Cllrs acknowledged that the applicants have tried to accommodate the objections received previously. The alterations are now acceptable, however Cllrs would still like to see the cart-lodge to be ancillary to the host dwelling. Cllrs conceded that previous concerns appear to have been addressed. Most of the development is behind the existing property and now looks sympathetic and in-keeping. Cllr Baker was happy to propose this application as it stands – reducing the height of the garage has had a positive impact. Seconded by Cllr Ratcliffe. Cllr Reeve abstained from commenting / voting. All other Cllrs were in favour of the application – approved at parish council level.

12. Planning Decisions

- **DC/20/03161.** Householder Application - Erection of single storey extension (amended scheme to approved. Ivydene Near Old Newton Hall, Sandford Road, Old Newton, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4PL. **MSDC Planning Permission has been granted.**

- **DC/20/05393.** Application for Listed Building Consent - Remedial works and repairs to the internal and external frame. Timber repairs to original external frame on North, East, South (Party Wall) and West walls. Internal and external works as detailed in the Repair Schedule at 47 And 49 Church Road, Old Newton, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4ED. **MSDC Planning Permission has been granted.**
- **Planning Enforcement – Brown Street.** This issue has not been raised by the Parish Council or the District Council but from a parishioner on Brown Street. Cllrs Welham & Eburne were contacted by a resident of Brown Street with a request for information from the planning permission for four homes on Brown Street, just south of Yew Tree Farm. The resident expressed concern over the removal of a hedge in front of one of those properties. A copy of the original outline planning permission dating back to 1991 stated that the hedge should remain. Copy has been provided to the resident and planning enforcement offices have noted the inquiry. No investigation is currently under way but MSDC are aware. Chair asked how we want to move forward – In normal circumstance it's a domestic property and is this not beyond our remit ... Resident needs to push this if they feel it necessary. Cllrs are happy to leave this alone unless raised again by resident / parishioners.

13. Annual Parish Meeting – Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 21st April 2021. Due to covid restrictions over the last year any reports are likely to be limited as well as numbers allowed to attend. Proposed to defer the meeting and perhaps have a celebratory meeting next year when restrictions have been lifted. This was seconded and all Cllrs agreed. Clerk to publish notices and include in the Crier submission for April.

14. Play Equipment Supporting Letter – The Parish Council have included the plans within the village piip and brought forward the time frame expected for completion to within the next 5 years. Cllrs welcome the new equipment proposed for teenagers and pre- teens, as these are groups not presently catered for and provision for disabled and able-bodied children with the net swing was also well received. The Parish Council are aware that the project team have carried out a survey prior to deciding on equipment. With the proposed expansion of the village with forthcoming approved housing developments, more play opportunities are essential for the community and the Parish Council fully support the fundraising efforts. Cllr Goudy proposed the Clerk writes a suitable supporting letter, seconded by Cllr Baker – all Cllrs were unanimously in favour.

15. Grass Cutting Tender

- The playing field behind the village hall – Grass cutting and strimming where required (not including the football or cricket pitches as these are done separately). To be done fortnightly through the cutting season.
- The two fenced off areas of the play equipment – strimming to be done fortnightly through the cutting season
- The front of the village hall to include maintenance of the grass (to be done fortnightly through the cutting season).
- Ward Green, off Silver Street (the area not fenced off around the pond) – Grass cutting only - to be done once monthly through the cutting season.

<u>Company</u>	<u>Tender</u>	
CGM – Current Contractor	£1,812.55 + VAT = £2175.06 total for the year invoiced monthly following works completion. Currently charging £65.00 + VAT for Ward Green – x 7 cuts £455.00 + VAT £546.00	Actual costs to date paid to CGM is £2,313.63 and pond maintenance is £140.00 total spend to date is £2,453.63 (inclusive of VAT) Current budget for Grass cutting and pond maintenance is £2,500.00
Martin Reeve	Ward Green only - £70.00 per cut estimates 6 x cuts per year not VAT registered= £420.00	

Cllrs would like to support local where possible. CGM have been a nightmare on the Ward Green area last year but have done a good job with the village hall areas – Proposed to ask CGM to continue with the village hall areas and ask Martin to do Ward Green – to be reviewed again in two years. Seconded, all Cllrs were in favour. Clerk to inform Mr Reeve and CGM.

16. Cemetery Update

- Clerk has made contact with Mrs Spalding owner of Mr George Spalding grave that has recently failed a topple test. Mrs Spalding has instructed stonemasons to make good and repair the headstone in the cemetery at the earliest opportunity and stonemasons have already been in touch with the Clerk.
- The second headstone / graves identified to the clerk for Mr & Mrs Tyte the Clerk is unable to identify who the grave owners might be. The Clerk has asked various undertakers for their help in finding the grave owners but unfortunately no help has been forwarded. We do know that it will not have been Andrew Bingham as he was not in business at the time of the burials. Clerk has had some help from Stowmarket Town Council in some template letters that have been used to write to the grave owners / notices to be attached to the graves. Any notices attached to the graves will need to be laminated. Chair has asked if a full survey of the cemetery can be obtained once covid restrictions allow before any notices are served.
- Cllr Goudy has replaced the locks – shed does have a lot of rubbish, the Beir is in disrepair. And the sheds need to be cleared out. The noticeboards also need to be painted, with regard to the Beir – whether it is ours or the Church's, the Church do not believe it is their's. The bins are still being put out on a fortnightly basis by Cllr Goudy – Many thanks for continuing to do this.

17. Highway's Update – Includes correspondence received regarding Silver Street, Greenacres & Falconer Avenue

- Email received from resident regarding School Hill Highways issues.
- Email received from resident regarding Silver Street and Falconer Avenue. Cllr Miller showed photos of areas on Greenacres and Falconer Avenue – parked vehicles within 30ft of a junction is illegal. Sandford Road is also being continually eroded. Both district and county Cllrs have been asked for assistance. It has been confirmed that although it is illegal to drive over a raised kerb, offending individuals have to be caught in the act. Public Realm at MSDC may have land ownership maps available. Cllr Stringer asked if we could find out if there are car parking spaces available or if there is genuinely not enough parking spaces for the properties - Local intelligence is vital. Cllr Stringer will ascertain land ownership. Falconer Avenue is another issue causing concern regarding potholes and the sub-standard road surface. Cllrs would like to look at making the whole area more attractive and perhaps when restrictions lift, we could visit and look at how we can improve the area in general. All areas to be investigated further to see if there is anything more that can be done. Also need to include the entrance with Silver Street and Wassicks Lane, the erosion of verges is now getting really bad and also needs attention.
- Pothole repaired on Church Road – Due to the poor quality of the repair a response has been received to schedule a visit to address the repair again. Thank you to Cllr Stringer for following this up on our behalf.

18. Footpath Map Update – the rights of way officer has not come back to us yet but Cllr Stringer will continue to chase for us. To be raised again as an agenda item at the next meeting.

19. Councillors Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

- Cllr Helliwell – Footpaths are very muddy and well used but several people commented on the use by cycles and even motorcycles. Can we add any signage to stop cyclists from using footpaths. There isn't normally a sign for footpaths but it is illegal to use footpaths for cycles. Cllr Stringer will investigate. Costs would be at our expense not highways. Possibly to include in the Crier notice.
- Dog mess is still an issue... complaining on the local facebook page. Link on the website regarding reporting dog mess to MSDC.
- Footbridge over a ditch that is damaged has been reported by Cllr Clements.

20. Public Forum – Nothing raised.

21. Additional Matters for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting.

- Cemetery to be deferred to the May meeting.
- Highways
- Footpaths

22. Date of the next Parish Council meeting – Next meeting: Wednesday 7th April 2021 7.30pm – Full Monthly Parish Council Meeting.

Meeting closed at 22.03hrs