

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 – Public Meeting commenced at 7.30pm at Old Newton Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr J Miller (Chair), K Goudy, N Hardman, M Reeve, M Helliwell, M Clements (Vice-Chair), W Ratcliffe, K Baker, K Hall-Price (Clerk & RFO), District Cllr R Eburne, District Cllr K Welham, County Cllr A Stringer and 5 members of the public.

1. **Welcome & Apologies** - The Chairman welcomed everyone to the February meeting of the Parish Council. No apologies received or required.
2. **To receive any declarations of personal/prejudicial interest & to note dispensations**
  - a) To consider any requests for dispensations – No new requests received.
  - b) To note existing dispensations. The standing dispensation for Cllr Reeve in respect of the proposed development of the Greenacres Site.
3. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023** – Cllr Helliwell raised that on Pg 957 the word Chalice is spelt incorrectly. Minutes to be amended before approval and public availability. Proposed by Cllr Clements and seconded by Cllr Goudy. All Cllrs in favour to approve the minutes. The minutes will be signed by the Chairman once the amendment has been made.
4. **Clerks report following previous meeting (to be received as read – Cllr questions)**
  - The Clerk needs to request that we move the April meeting date from 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April. The Clerks husband has booked some days away in Germany and the Netherlands visiting friends. The clerk will be away on holiday from Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March -Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April inclusive. The May meeting has already been pushed back due to the election to 10<sup>th</sup> May and we also have the annual parish meeting scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> April so the Clerk can't see this is too much of an issue but obviously need Cllrs to agree to move the meeting. Proposed and seconded to allow the Clerk to move the meeting to the proposed date of 12<sup>th</sup> April – All dates need to be confirmed and clarified on the parish notice boards and website.
  - The Clerk has advertised in the Crier that we will be looking for additional Cllrs following the election in May.
  - The village website has been updated to include all minutes and information approved.
  - The Clerk has asked Mortech to quote to look at our website accessibility issues identified previously by Stephen Moore. Quote has been received at £265.00 ex VAT. Stephen identified that this was circa the cost he would expect to pay for this type of work. Proposed by Cllr Hardman and seconded by Cllr Baker. All Cllrs in favour. Clerk to confirm to Mortech to undertake the work required to ensure we are compliant.
  - Dog Bins review – Cllr Hardman has confirmed that all of our dog and waste bins are present and accounted for, in use and have been emptied recently. The one on Finningham Road (near 28) is likely to need either a replacement post or a repair soon though, as it has been eaten away near the ground quite substantially.
  - Clerk has received a complaint from a resident on Greenacres regarding the parking again and the visibility out onto Stowmarket Road is so hazardous that he almost had a serious accident this week. Resident states that the waste Collection lorry can only access by driving over the green and the green is now nothing more than churned up mud. Residents refuse to use the car parking bays and consistently park on the road / outside residents properties / on the green verges. The resident was most unhappy and asking what the Parish Council can do to help this situation. The Chairman confirmed that there is a builders sack and pallet and no grass as its constantly been used for parking.. Cllrs to look at whether we could put in some bollards. We would need highways authority to fix any posts. County could give the parish licence to place such bollards within the first meter of highway. It would need to be using a registered contractor off their approved contractor list. Clerk to investigate.
  - Clerk has received information regarding the proposed road works / closure that will affect the A14 from 7<sup>th</sup> February for a period of approximately 12 + months. This information has been published onto the face-book – spotted in Old Newton page and the clerk will include in the next edition of the crier.

**Police Report** – (Crime map stats are always going to be circa 6 weeks out of date).

- Oct 2022 – 3 reported incidents - 1 x violence / sexual offence on or near Station Road, 1 x criminal damage / arson on or near Station Road, 1 x violence / sexual offence on or near Greenacres.
- Nov 2022 – 2 x vehicle crimes reported on or near Sandford Road.
- Dec 2022 – Statistics not available at time of print but we are aware of the burglary at St Mary's Church in Old Newton. It took place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December sometime between 10am and 11.30pm when an unknown person or persons entered the unlocked Church on Church Road. A safe was forced open and church objects, including a silver dish, a pewter box and chalice were stolen.

## 5. Financial matters & Financial report.

### Bank Account Balances:

- Barclays Statement Balance = **£29,926.43** (30.01.2023)
- Scottish Widows 60 Day account balance = **£3,382.15** (31.12.22)
- Scottish Widows Deposit account = **£253.77** (31.12.22)
- Public Works Loan – Balance outstanding = **£12,636.51** (06.04.2022)

**Budget / Finance Review** – Precept papers have been accepted and confirmed by MSDC. The amount of precept agreed is £30,030.52 to be paid in 2 instalments in April and September of £15,015.26. This precept gives the Parish a Council Tax Band D amount of £64.39. This is an increase of 5.58% on 2022/23. These are the amounts that will be shown on the Council Tax Bill.

### Accounts for payment – January 2023:

EXPENDITURE	CHQ/BA CS/SO/ DDR		NET	VAT	TOTAL
Karen Price	Bacs	Salary £1,131.20 – holiday pay £136.54, tax £43.80, NI £26.37, pension £50.71 plus expenses £50.53	£1,197.38		£1,197.38
HMRC PAYE	Bacs	Employee NI £26.37, Employee Tax £43.80, Employer NI £70.34	£140.51		£140.51
Nest Pension	DDR	Employee £50.71, Employer £38.04	£88.75		£88.75
PWLB	DDR	Streetlights loan repayment	£2,613.62		£2,613.62
Old Newton V/Hall	Bacs	Room Hire – PC Meetings	£110.00		£110.00
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	Payslip				
BMSDC	DC	Cleansing Grant Qtr 3 22/23	£185.25		
Bierton & Woods	100146	Additional increased payment – Edmund Baker memorial stone	£25.00		

Proposed by Cllr Clements seconded by Cllr Goudy – All in favour. Cllr Miller to authorise the payments.

## 6. Correspondence Received / Circulars

- East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) Project Update – Email received has been circulated to all Cllrs.
- Mid Suffolk CAB – Cost of Living Forum 24<sup>th</sup> February any groups / individuals that Cllrs feel would be in a position to help.
- Email received regarding the blue gates at Church Road development site and the concrete blocks now in place. The Blue gates have been “fixed” by the deposit of two large concrete blocks in front of the gates. Clerk has asked again if the entrance could be moved back further into the site to allow easier access and egress to and from the site for construction traffic.
- SCC - Confirmed that the damaged guard rail outside the Primary School has been approved for replacement / repair within the next 14 weeks...
- BMSDC – Guide to street naming and numbering process / service
- BMSDC – Feb Half term holiday activities – Facebook – spotted in Old Newton page?
- Will Redmayne – Damage to verges – Wassicks Lane
- Jo Churchill – Updated flyer – for display at the noticeboard at the shop.
- Old Newton Primary School – New lighting email / update – Go back to the school unfortunately doesn’t seem to have stopped at the weekend. Sooner fixed the better for the school and the nearby residents.
- Buckingham Palace acknowledgement of letter sent following the death of Queen Elizabeth II from King Charles III. Shared on the village face book page and include in the crier.
- Letter regarding the village sign. WI want to replace the village sign plaque. The original was installed 30 plus years ago. Cllr Hardman believes we need to do a risk assessment - The post does move and needs to be secured and made safe. We either need to lower it or replace the post. Jon Hines to be asked to look at it for us and quote for any remedials. Cllr Clements to speak to Jon Hines, Clerk to email Jon Hines. Chairman indicated that the current post is 2.7meters to the top of the post. Cllrs asked if we could include this as part of the Coronation celebrations and costs associated.

## 7. District Councillor's Report (to be received as read – Cllr questions) – Mrs Rachel Eburne / Mr Keith Welham

**Cost of Living Forum – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023** Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice are running a cost of living forum on 24 February. They want to hear from community leaders about how the cost of living crisis is affecting the people in their communities and will have a particular focus on rural issues. Keith attended a similar event which focussed on the Stowmarket area. MSDC website has some cost of living pages on the website which have been refreshed and focus on the support available to people to help them boost their income, and identify their options if they need support with their housing, fuel and energy, and food/ other essentials. Generally, these pages are the best way for people to find out what support there is available locally.

**Council Meeting 26 January** - What should have been a short meeting was not completed until around 8.30. Several inaccuracies were found in some of the papers presented and time was taken up making amendments before decisions could be taken. The most significant decision was to agree to adopt a working age council tax reduction scheme which would allow council taxpayers on universal credit to receive up to 100% reduction of council tax and simplify the bandings used to calculate reduction amounts.

**Cabinet Meeting 6 February** - Cabinet will be considering the General Fund budget and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2023/24. The administration is proposing a zero increase in Council Tax. Even without any increase, the proposed surplus of income over expenditure is planned to be £3.045million. Whatever Cabinet decides, the budget will go to the full Council meeting on 23 February for debate and decision.

Cabinet will also consider the HRA budget and their recommendation will also be debated and decisions taken by full Council. A 7% increase in council house rents is being proposed – just over £6 for social rents and £9 for affordable rents. Also, a 10% increase in garage rents – in line with the increase in CPI – and increases in sheltered housing service and utility charges. Cabinet are being asked to agree to pause the delivery of the electric bus rural transport project. This project was included in the 2022/23 budget because of an opposition amendment to the budget.

An update on progress with the Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project will be considered by Cabinet with a recommendation that a full planning application be submitted.

**A14 Roadworks** - We attended the A14 works consultation update on 27 January. The latest programme has the following details: For periods of 5 days or so at a time, between 7 February and 13 March, one carriageway of the A14 will be closed overnight to construct crossover points (just east of junction 47A, Haughley New Street, to just west of junction 49, Tothill) for the contraflow system. The closure will be from junction 43 (Bury sugar beet factory) to junction 51 (Coddendam). We have, again, asked for very clear signage to ensure the minimum of HGV traffic comes through our patch but short cuts, possibly through Old Newton, can be expected. The works were originally planned to take place from Tuesday, February 7, but a spokesman for National Highways has since confirmed that they have been postponed.

The contraflow system will then be in place between junctions 47a and 49 for when work starts. From 14 March for six months the eastbound carriageway will be replaced so everyone will drive on the westbound carriageway, between the crossover points, one lane each way with a 50mph speed limit. Then there will be a couple of night closures to reverse the contraflow system and six months work to replace the westbound carriageway, so everyone then drives on the new eastbound carriageway, one lane each way. Information will be updated as work proceeds. Completion is anticipated in April/May 2024 depending on the weather and other factors.

**Stowmarket Placemaking and Wayfinding Project** - Keith attended a briefing on this project. Unfortunately, it was poorly attended. The interim report from the consultants is now available. It is agreed that there is much to be done if Stowmarket is to be promoted as a tourist destination. More should be made of the agricultural and industrial heritage of the town. Safer and more convenient movement around the town is needed. Also, hotels, B&B establishments, quality food outlets, improved shopfronts, removal of non-essential traffic.

**Gateway 14** - The spine road connecting A1120 through the site to Mill Lane, Creeting St Peter did not open to traffic before Christmas. But a 'grand opening ceremony' was held on 1 February. Work has commenced on the building for The Range.

**Parish Liaison Meeting** - A reminder that the Parish Liaison Meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 February, 1.30 to 3.30pm, at The Mix in Stowmarket. Keith will be able to attend.

**Council Homes – Safety Issues** - Action is being taken to resolve issues within the service which maintains council housing. Officers began a programme of in-depth assessments and have identified problems with health and safety compliance. Across the two districts' 6,788 homes, 344 do not currently have up-to-date electrical safety reports. Gas inspections are also overdue on 92 properties, and asbestos reinspection surveys are required on 33 homes. Urgent work is already underway – including additional inspections, an overhaul of existing processes, and obtaining more robust data around health and safety compliance to provide tenants with complete reassurance.

**Local Planning Issues** - Nothing further has been heard about the Moat Meadow development and it is not listed for a committee decision in the near future. The planning permission for reserved matters on the church road development has been approved. Clerk to ask for an initial meeting to start the ball rolling with communicating.

**Locality Funding** - We still have funds available and would welcome applications from any local club or organisation in need of funding towards the cost of a local project.

### **Cllr Questions / Comments**

- Cllr Baker asked if it was ok to share the addendum information with the school regarding the Cost of Living Forum. This was agreed.
- Falconer Avenue issue with parking on the grass verge that MSDC have spent money on – The next step would be to place some bollards to stop the parking. This is causing an issue for larger vehicles including waste collection lorries.

### **8. County Councillor's Report – (to be received as read – Cllr questions) - Mr Andrew Stringer**

**SCC Financial Budget-** SCC is currently going through its process to approving the budget for 2023/24. At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee discussed the papers in preparation for them to go to Cabinet and then Full Council.

The Conservative budget proposes a 2.99% increase in tax, broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1 % increase in general tax. The Council aim to make most of its savings through increasing the number of unfunded vacancies amongst the Council's workforces. Our Group believes that impact council services have faced this year requires the Council to increase general tax by an additional 0.89%. We have proposed how we would spend the additional funding to protect services from the rising demand and costs.

**Budget Amendments** – Our Group has proposed amendments to the Conservative budget for 2023/24. Initially, we would propose to increase the general tax closer to the Government-recommended amount, which will be a 0.89% increase. This equates to a £9.94 annual rise, or a 19p weekly rise for a Band B property and would generate just over £3.3m.

Currently, SCC is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030. Our Group proposes to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a clearer pathway towards Net Zero. In addition, we propose to facilitate a county-wide review into Suffolk's speed limits, in the hope to provide residents with a clearer path to more appropriate travel in their communities. On the frontline, we will use £1m to actively recruit Occupational Therapists and Social Workers, as well as invest more into Suffolk Libraries to help maintain their necessary services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we would invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage.

**Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track.** At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the Carbon Budget. This is a document that is intended to calculate the amount of carbon SCC emits through its services. More importantly, it shows the Council's progress towards achieving Net Zero by 2030. This year's carbon budget shows that SCC is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2030 – that's still half of what we are emitting now. Our Group believes more needs to be done to improve the accuracy of calculating all of SCC's emissions, which is why we have proposed a Carbon Budget Officer is employed to provide a sole focus on improving the reporting of carbon emissions.

**SCC's Further Investment in Trees & Hedgerows** - SCC are planning to invest £110,000 in managing and inspecting trees and hedgerows. The money will be used to ensure that trees and hedgerows are given the best chance to thrive.

Currently, the Council has planted around 50,000 trees and hedges this planting season. This comes as the latest science indicates trees can capture nearly twice the amount of carbon as previously thought. Our Group believes this highlights the greater need to plant more trees, and more importantly how crucial it is to not unnecessarily cut trees down. For more info, visit: <https://phys.org/news/2022-12-uk-woodlands-carbon-previously.html>

A14 works is good news as the concrete reached the end of its life over 8 years ago. The diversion is fairly long and will route the lorries via A143 to the A140 and it will be overnight. The programme of events is on the website. Number of road closures in Bacton. Rectory Road between the doctors and the shop will be closed for 5 weeks. 22<sup>nd</sup> February is expected date for these works, and we can expect an uplift in vehicle movements through Old Newton.

Thank you for the work done on securing the railings outside the school.

Diversion for footpath 47 will be better now that a compromise has been agreed to go over a temporary bridge

### **9. Planning Applications**

- **DC/23/00310 | Listed Building Consent** - Replacement of 2No. Softwood windows with 2No. Hardwood windows. | Church Farm Church Road Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4PH. Deadline for comments 22.02.23. Extension on deadline has been approved and will be on the agenda for the March meeting.

**10. Planning Decisions from MSDC**

- **DISCHARGE OF CONDITION(S) TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 Proposal: Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/21/02592** - Conditions 3 (Fenestration), 4 (Details of Bricks), 5 (Details of Roofing Materials), 6 (Details of Timber Cladding Material) and 7 (Details of Rainwater Goods) Location: Browns Place Farm, Brown Street, Old Newton, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4QB. MSDC have deemed the approved conditions as acceptable.
- **Application for approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Planning Permission DC/19/02878 dated 12/02/2021.** Town and Country Planning 2015. Submission of details for Appearance, Layout and Scale for the Erection of 64No dwellings (including 22 affordable). Land East Of, Greenacres, Old Newton, Suffolk. Reserved matters have been approved.

**11. Kings Coronation Celebrations – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

What would Cllrs like to do – Accepted that we do not need any more benches...

- Trees in and around the playing field area – Ground maintenance would have to work around what is there.
- Commemorative pergola – The current play equipment is now better used. There was a wooden gazebo suggested for the playing field. Chair to speak to Village Hall Committee.
- Sports and Social Club are trying to organise something and there is an art exhibition to be organised.
- Plaque on the village sign from the WI and a revamp of the sign and post.
- Children at the school received jubilee coins. FONSA have requested if there is a 32mm commemorative medal £2.99 each. £313.39. Suggested that we do it for all children in the village. Proposed by Cllr Baker to provide commemorative medals for the Coronation for all children within the village. Numbers wise to be confirmed. 84 children at the primary school, 28 preschool and surplus 50 coins. £750.00 suggested allocation of funds - Seconded by Cllr Clements, all Cllrs in favour. Agreed.
- Clerk to contact village organisations to see what if anything else is being done in the village.

**12. Footpath Maps – Committee update.** Cllr Helliwell has submitted a copy of the proposed map and write ups. The Clerk has uploaded the 4 circular walk routes onto the parish council website and needs to upload the map. The Clerk has also looked at trying to allocate QR codes for each walk but has to admit this might be slightly above the clerks technical know how... Excellent work and well done to Cllr's Helliwell and Hardman for their efforts. The revised map can be reinstalled on the exterior of the village hall. Chairman asked to pass on our thanks to Colin Barber for his assistance. Proposed by Cllr Goudy, seconded by Clements – All in favour. Cllr Ratcliffe will assist the Clerk with the QR codes if necessary.

**13. Risk Assessments –** Clerk has requested risk assessments from ONGAA and Onwoods / ONEG and templates from Stowupland / Haughley Parish Clerk – all have been forwarded to Cllr Hardman as they have been received. Nothing yet from ONEG / Onwoods. The Cemetery one has been done by Cllrs Hardman and Goudy. Intentions are to sign off at the March monthly PC meeting. Include the village sign onto the list of risk assessments. Chairman thanked Cllr Hardman for her efforts and hard work to date.

**14. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Miller update.** Currently no one who is willing to come forward. Agreed to look at it again after the elections / AGM.

**15. Cemetery**

- Ian – Cemetery maintenance has not completed any hrs in January due to the weather. He will be looking to lift the memorial stone markers and raise them on some gravel when he commences maintenance work again in February.
- Tap area is very wet and muddy. Road plainings or slabs. Clerk has some slabs to donate.

**16. Phone Box – Public Library –** Cllr Miller has spent time sorting the books. Thrown away over 90 books as they were soaked or had been eaten by mice and rats so they have been recycled! It is intended that we close the phone box for a couple of weeks. Empty the books to sanitise / clean. An offer has been received and accepted to build some bespoke shelving. Estimated cost of £100.00. Suggested that we close from 1<sup>st</sup> March for 2 weeks. Chair to remove and box the books. Proposed by Cllr Hardman, seconded by Cllr Baker – All Cllrs in favour.

**17. Queens Platinum Jubilee Benches – Cllrs Clements / Miller update.** The benches are now installed with the exception of the one at the cemetery. The pad is being done by the end of this week – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 at the cemetery and the bench will be installed circa 2 weeks later. The benches look really smart and Cllrs have already received positive comments regarding them.

**18. Councillors matters to be brought to the attention of the Council.**

- ANPR data still to be received from the Police. Agreed to keep the SID unit on Finningham Road.
- The Chairman welcomed back Cllr Baker who has been recovering from illness.

**19. Public Forum**

- Philip Groom – Village hall bricks and mortar are going up now – Thanks to our District and County Cllrs for providing the majority of funds. The committee have worked super hard over the last 6 years to make this actually happen. Expectations of the committee are to be completed by July 2023.
- The family that have been collecting aluminium cans for the under 5's are now unable to accept any more but they are still collecting scrap metal.

**20. Additional Matters for inclusion on the agenda for the March 2023 meeting.**

- Coronation celebrations
- Risk Assessments update
- Benches update
- Footpaths Map update
- Phone box Library update
- Village Sign
- Keep Moat - Liaison meeting – Church Road Development

**21. Date of the next meeting – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023. April Meeting to be moved to 12<sup>th</sup> April – Clerk to update all meeting notices. Chairman thanked everyone for attending.**

**Meeting closed at 21.24hrs**