



## ASHFIELD-CUM-THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

**All Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct Regulations.**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 remotely via Zoom.

Attendance	Myles Hansen (Chair) (MHa)	Paul Whayman (PW)	Sarah Clare (Clerk)
	Robert Grimsey (Vice-Chair) (RG)	Simon Garrett (SG)	
	Kathie Guthrie (District Councillor) (KG)	Matthew Hicks (County Councillor) (MHi)	

Public present at the meeting: 0

### ACTPC 20-06-01 Apologies for Absence

Ruth Hart (Parish Councillor) (RH) was unable to attend due to personal commitments and had sent her apologies. The Council accepted.

### ACTPC 20-06-02 Public Forum

None

### ACTPC 20-06-03 Update from County Councillor

The County Councillor's Report had previously been circulated to the Council and has also been posted on the village website [www.ashfield.onesuffolk.net](http://www.ashfield.onesuffolk.net).

MHi brought attention to the following points:

The Home But Not Alone phone line has been reactivated due to the second National Lockdown, the service was initially set up in March/April to help those who needed emergency support. Although 10,000 volunteers had initially come forward, many did not actually end up being allocated tasks during the last lockdown as communities and neighbours came together to offer support, but the helpline is still available on 0800 876 6926 to anyone who may need assistance.

The Suffolk Advice & Support Service has now also been launched to assist in anticipation that large numbers of people who may never have had to seek advice before would not know where to turn to. This service can help people with small tailored grants to help their immediate need, with the aim being to avoid having people turning in desperation to unsuitable sources, such as loan sharks. MHi outlined a few examples of help that had already been given and urged anyone who may need assistance to call on 0800 068 3131

MHi also highlighted that he has funding still available in his locality budget, which ideally needs to be spent before the end of the financial year. Few applications have come through this year as community groups had not been meeting.

MHi went on to explain the rationale behind why Suffolk was put into Tier 2 of lockdown restrictions following the second National Lockdown in November. Although Suffolk was only one position above Cornwall (which was put into Tier 1) at the end of the second National Lockdown, the county was put into Tier 2 due to the number of hospital admissions, the remaining capacity of beds in hospitals and the flow of people in and out of Suffolk from surrounding counties, which have higher infection rates. The tiers are due to be reassessed on the Wednesday of next week and it is likely Suffolk will move up a tier, it is therefore important not to be complacent and keep observing all the social distancing rules.

Suffolk County Council is heavily involved with the NHS and Public Health England in assisting to roll-out the COVID-19 vaccination programme, by locating suitable venues across the county. The NHS will make the final decisions on who is prioritised for the vaccination and when the venues will be booked.

The completion date for the roadworks at the A140 near Brome has been delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions, but work is coming along well, with the new roundabouts now in place – MHi reminded everyone

Signed ..... *W. Clive* ..... (Clerk) Signed ..... *M. Hicks* ..... (Chair) 13

to keep an eye on the website [www.eyea140scheme.co.uk](http://www.eyea140scheme.co.uk) to see if there are any scheduled closures, to avoid being caught up in traffic.

Finally, MHi explained about Adopt East, a new initiative to help encouraging more families to come forward to find forever homes for children in the care system. Adopt East will widen the net, to help match children to prospective parents across all of the eastern counties rather than just in Suffolk.

RG asked MHi if he had received the email he had sent about flooding issues in the village. MHi confirmed that he had received the email and would look into the matter and advise RG accordingly.

#### ACTPC 20-06-04 Update from District Councillor

The District Councillor's Report had previously been circulated to the Council and has also been posted on the village website [www.ashfield.onesuffolk.net](http://www.ashfield.onesuffolk.net).

KG brought attention to the following points:

There had been some issues surrounding a resident in the village, who appeared to be operating a business from residential premises. The District Council had investigated and dealt with the matter.

KG reiterated the call from MHi about locality budget monies, as there is also funding available from District level. MHa will publicise the availability of these funds through the village email system in case anyone has a suitable project that could apply.

#### ACTPC 20-06-05 Declaration of Interests



None

#### ACTPC 20-06-06 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by SG, seconded by MHa all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

#### Matters Arising and Action Points from Previous Minutes

1. Report potholes on roads in the village and surrounding areas that are a danger to cyclists on the Suffolk Highways Online Reporting Tool. To be discussed later in meeting.
2. Draft explanatory note to parishioners about the current situation regarding the SID machines in the village. DISCHARGED and to be discussed later in meeting.
3. Circulate preliminary reply from Suffolk Highways regarding the proposed speed restriction extension, collate Councillor's responses and reply to MHi. DISCHARGED and to be discussed later in meeting.
4. Report overgrown hedges causing concern on the A1120 on the Suffolk Highways Online Reporting Tool. ONGOING
5. Forward link to online tutorials on website accessibility to SG. DISCHARGED
6. Conduct audit of website accessibility. To be discussed later in meeting
7. Arrange for the nomination of Grove Lane to become a Quiet Lane. DISCHARGED and to be discussed later in meeting.
8. Circulate District Council's response to the consultation on changes to the planning process to Parish Councillors when received, collate responses and submit Parish Council response to consultation accordingly. DISCHARGED.
9. To advise SALC payroll of the Council's acceptance of the NJC recommended pay settlement. DISCHARGED
10. To distribute payments as approved at the September meeting. DISCHARGED

Signed .....  ..... (Clerk) Signed .....  ..... (Chair)

ACTPC 20-06-07 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting:  
i) DC/20/04742 – Householder application – erection of single storey rear extension, cartlodge and home office at The Cottage, Near School, The Street, IP14 6LX.

Councillors had studied the application in advance of the meeting. After discussion it was decided to **SUPPORT** the application based on the following:

- In keeping with the neighbourhood

RG proposed, PW seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED.**


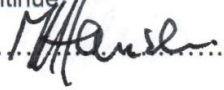
- b) To consider any planning applications that have been submitted since agenda was published: None  
c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications: None to report

ACTPC 20-06-08 Parish Council Activities

- a) To consider co-option to fill vacancies on Council – MHa asked whether anyone present wished to be considered for co-option to the Council. Nobody came forward. The Clerk confirmed that the vacancy is published on the village website.  
b) To review Parish Council insurance cover – The Clerk had circulated the policy due for renewal for Councillors to consider. After discussion MHa proposed that the cover is fit for purpose and the renewal be completed, PW seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED.**  
c) Debrief of support offered throughout village during Lockdown – PW had been the primary lead in organising the support network during the first National Lockdown. Thirty volunteers had come forward and twenty-nine jobs had been completed – some of which were repeat users. Although not all the volunteers had actually been allocated jobs, three volunteers in particular had done a lot of work and PW will write a letter of thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to these three.

During the second National Lockdown an email was sent out to make sure that everyone was aware that the volunteer network was still available, but this time only two requests for help were received. It is thought that this is because the second Lockdown did not come without warning, and people had managed to make arrangements with friends and family in advance. RG had visited all the people in the village who were not on the email list as well, to ensure that nobody was missed. It is thought that with the village network and the Suffolk County Council Home But Not Alone team there is sufficient support to help all who need it.

- d) Arrangements for formal farewell to former Councillor – A book has been assembled by a parishioner that will be given as a keepsake. PW felt the Council should also send a bouquet of flowers to say thank you. The Councillors will make personal arrangements to do so, with SG organising the ordering and delivery.  
e) To consider any responses received from parishioners regarding the explanation about the SID machines in the village – MHa had circulated information via the Parish Council email list, but no responses had been received.  
f) Report on Website Accessibility Audit – SG reported that he is still working on the matter and will report back at the next meeting.  
g) Pothole Reporting on Village Roads – RG noted that, having looked at the potholes that had been reported to the Parish Council, he was of the opinion that going on the existing criteria as published by Suffolk Highways, they were not likely to be prioritised to be repaired, as they were not more than 2" deep. RG will monitor the potholes and report them on the online reporting tool if they get worse. MHa will reply to the parishioner who reported the potholes to advise of course of action.  
h) Update on Speed Restriction Extension – MHi reported that he has approved a sum of £1.5K to enable the required speed surveys to be undertaken, but again warned Councillors that this is a long process. It is likely to take even longer due to the receipt of Government funding for cycle schemes within the county that Suffolk County Council is obligated to prioritise. MHi thanked PW for responding so quickly to the request for confirmation of the exact locations that needed to be surveyed. It is now just a case of waiting for the survey results to come in before the process can continue.


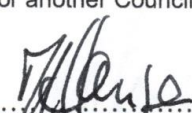
Signed .....  ..... (Clerk) Signed .....  ..... (Chair)

- i) Report on Footpaths – RG reported that during the second National Lockdown there had been a noticeable increase in people using the village footpath network. RG has personally walked the entire village network and whilst everywhere is accessible it is heavy underfoot in some places, due to the season. One bridge in particular needs a new sleeper, RG offered to carry out the work, but the Rights of Way officer has confirmed that they will deal with the matter instead. RG has however replaced a few way-markers to help people when walking cross-field paths.
- j) Consideration for adopting the Town & Parish Council Hedge Noticing Scheme – RG had circulated the information, which sets out the criteria on how to deal with overgrown hedges that are encroaching on pavements and roads. After discussion it was felt that it would be better to leave this matter to Suffolk Highways. PW asked whether it would be good practice to let people know of the issue before formally reporting them. RG said that he usually tries to approach the landowner if he knows who they are, but if the landowner is either unknown or un-cooperative then he would report any issues using the online reporting tool. RG is currently working on hedges that are overgrowing the A1120 in places, resulting in over-running of the verges on the opposite side of the road and will report back at a future meeting.
- k) District Council Funded Tree & Hedgerow Planting Scheme – The District Council are seeking information from Parish Councils about areas of land that may be available for tree planting. There is a possibility of funding available next year for hedgerow planting from DEFRA and therefore it may be possible for trees to be planted with the purchase and planting costs being borne by the District Council. Future maintenance of the trees would then fall upon the Parish Council. After discussion it was agreed that there were no suitable locations within the village that fitted the defined criteria. The Clerk will advise the District Council accordingly.
- l) Quiet Lanes – Next Steps – A report shared by Worlingworth Parish Council's lead volunteer on the Quiet Lane scheme from a meeting that had taken place, had shown the scheme to likely be costly with lack of evidence that the designation offers any benefit to road users. After discussion it was agreed not to pursue this matter any further.
- m) Consideration of how to support Census 2021 within the village – Councillors agreed that although it is not a Parish Council responsibility, they would all they can to assist, allowing for COVID restrictions. MHa noted that there are not many in the village who do not have access to complete the census online and those that are will most likely have friends or family that can help. RG confirmed that there are only a few houses in the village not on the village email system and he will ensure that they are visited closer to the time to make sure that they can complete the census.

ACTPC 20-06-09 Finance

- a) To review the financial statement for the quarter – The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement for December. There were no queries. PW proposed acceptance, MHa seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) To finalise and adopt the 2021-2022 budget - The Clerk had circulated a draft budget for the Council to consider, which included a proposed increase of the precept by 1.9% (the maximum allowed without incurring a parish referendum) in order to allow a reserve to be created for the Council.  
  
PW proposed the adoption of the budget as circulated, RG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will arrange for the approved Budget to be published on the website.
- c) To set precept for 2021-2022 – Following adoption of the budget the Precept was set for 2021-2022 with an increase of 1.9%. PW proposed, SG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will complete and return the form to the District Council together with the supporting budget.
- d) To consider request from Clerk for funding to purchase a new laptop for the Parish Council – The Clerk reported that the current laptop is not able to support the online package Zoom and has had to be using another machine to facilitate remote meetings during the lockdown period. Additionally, even before remote meeting was undertaken, it had caused issues at in-person meetings when the Clerk was asked to look up files (as the computer takes a very long time to respond to requests), making working with the machine very frustrating.

The Clerk suggested a budget of £400 would be sufficient to purchase an up-to-date machine, this figure based upon a replacement laptop that had to be purchased for another Council recently.

Signed .....  ..... (Clerk) Signed .....  ..... (Chair)

MHa proposed allocating the funding from the Council's contingency funds and authorising the purchase of a laptop, PW seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will make arrangements to purchase a new machine and submit receipts for reimbursement.

SG suggested that it may be worthwhile contacting either KG or MHi to see if their locality budgets could be used to fund a laptop for the Parish Council. The Clerk will explore this option before purchasing a machine.

e) To consider applications for funding as received – None have been submitted

f) To agree payments as detailed on the Payment Schedule

SG proposed authorisation, RG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will issue cheques accordingly.

ACTPC – 20-06-10 Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

a) RG queried the current situation with the Ashfield-cum-Thorpe Welfare Trust. MHa will make contact with the trustees and give a report at the next Parish Council meeting.

b) Items for next agenda:

- Welfare Trust Report
- Diary Dates for 2021-2022
- Report on overgrown hedges
- Report on Website Accessibility Audit

Items for the March Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at the latest, with any accompanying paperwork ready to be circulated with the agenda upon publication.

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 9.06pm. The next meeting is set for **Wednesday 10th March 2021** at 7.30 pm remotely via Zoom.

Sarah Clare  
Parish Clerk

Myles Hansen  
Chair

Signed Sarah Clare ..... (Clerk) Signed M Hansen ..... (Chair)