



ASHFIELD-CUM-THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 13th March 2023 at the Community Hall

Attendance	Robert Grimsey (Chair) (RG)	Chris Sharpe (CS)	Ruth Hart (RH)
	Simon Garrett (SG)	Sarah Clare (Clerk)	
	Matthew Hicks (County Councillor) (MHi)		

Public present at the meeting: 1

ACTPC-23-04-01 Apologies for Absence

Myles Hansen (Vice-Chair) (MHa) had sent his apologies due to family commitments. The Council accepted

Kathie Guthrie (District Councillor) (KG) had also sent her apologies.

ACTPC 23-04-02 Public Forum – to include Presentation from Debenham Dementia Project and discussion on ways to help the project meet parishioners in need

The project was started in 2009 as the founders started to recognise a need in the community with an aging population. Unfortunately, there is currently no cure and little ability to treat the symptoms of the various diseases that cause dementia, but with support in the community it is possible to live well with the condition. Support at a local level, such as that offered by Debenham Dementia Project can be much more effective than national programmes, especially with recognising the needs of the carer for the person with dementia. NHS and Social Services are always targeted directly at the patient, but a diagnosis of dementia can unfortunately lead to clinical symptoms in two people, as carers suffer from mental health breakdown, stress and depression. The reason many dementia patients end up in hospital or care homes is because of carer breakdown and therefore a scheme like the Debenham Dementia Project aims to provide care to both the patient and the carer.

Over the past fourteen years Debenham Dementia Project has helped a couple of hundred families, by enabling them to come together in a safe space to share problems and offer emotional and practical help and support. The Project is not a clinical setting, but offers various services, including lunch clubs, a fit club, transport to appointments and help with accessing professional services, with one-to-one advice where necessary. Currently there are about 45 regular volunteers, along with other people who help on a more ad-hoc basis. Unfortunately, COVID caused a major breakdown in the ability of the Project to offer help and support. Although as much as possible was done with online support, telephone calls and newsletters, actually meeting face-to-face is invaluable and the Project is currently trying to rebuild some of what was lost during the lockdown periods. New initiatives such as the TLC group – Talking, Listening & Caring have been started up and a full review of what the Project can offer to dementia patients and their families and carers is being undertaken to ensure that what is offered is appropriate to the needs of those that use the Project, including drawing in families from further afield than just Debenham. There are already families from Ashfield-cum-Thorpe benefiting from help and support.

The reason for the presentation today is part of the plan to rebuild the Project, by going out and meeting with local groups, councils and medical establishments it is hoped to raise awareness in the communities about the Debenham Dementia Project, to ensure that those who need it can access the help offered. Posters and leaflets were left with the Parish Council.

The Parish Council thanked the Debenham Dementia Project representative for the information and pledged to spread the word as widely as possible, using the village newsletter, website and noticeboards. More information is available at www.the-debenham-project.org.uk

Signed (Clerk) Signed (Chair)

ACTPC 23-04-03 Declaration of Interests

None

ACTPC 23-04-04 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.

MHi brought attention to the following:

The Budget for the forthcoming year has been approved, and although there are huge cost pressures the Council Tax has been put up by the minimum possible, 1.99% general and 2% adult social care. Suffolk has seen a big increase in the number of people over 65 in the past decade (an increase of 33%), which has led to increased demand for adult social care in the county. Despite these rises a further £15 million will need to be saved and this is being done by making changes across the organisation, but the Council has pledged not to reduce any frontline services

Trading standards have carried out a lot of work recently on vapes, many illegal vapes are circulating, which has led to concerns about the potential impact on the health of users. If anyone has concerns about the sale of illegal vapes (or cigarettes) then please report this in confidence via the Citizens Advice Consumer helpline 0808 223 1133.

A new highways services contract has been agreed with a company called Milestone Infrastructure. This company may be new to Suffolk, but have a good track record of working with other counties and lots of and positive feedback. An app is in development to improve communication between residents and those that deliver the works.

Suffolk Archives are seeking more volunteers – unfortunately many of their volunteer base before COVID has not returned, so new volunteers are being sought. Volunteering can be done in many ways, either remotely or in-person, for more information please visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/volunteering

Many of the host families who took in Ukrainian refugees are now coming to the end of the initial period, although many are still supporting, for a variety of reasons some people cannot continue. As a result Suffolk County Council is seeking new host families. Potential hosts are invited to contact the County Council for more information by emailing refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

RH asked about the volunteering opportunities at The Hold, as she had looked on the website and not found any information. CS also asked whether there was any sort of user forum available to help people understand how to access the archives. MHi agreed to try and find out more information about this, but explained that there are plans to move the archive site in Bury St Edmunds to a more accessible building, which may help some users.

SG asked about what help is being provided to reduce the problem with 'bed-blocking' in Suffolk. MHi said that although this is as nationally recognised problem, Suffolk is not actually doing too badly. Although there are a few patients caught in this situation it is below average. It is recognised that people do better in their home environment than in a hospital when it comes to recuperation and funding is in place to help address the issue.

RG thanked MHi for his help in resolving the issue of who is responsible for the road surfacing at the end of Grove Lane, it is understood that this is not a priority job, but at least the necessary work has been agreed and will hopefully take place in due course.

ACTPC 23-04-05 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.

ACTPC 23-04-06 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th February 2023 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by RH, seconded by SG all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

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ACTPC 23-04-07 Matters Arising and Action Points from the February Minutes

1. Submit responses to Planning Department at District Council as agreed. DISCHARGED
2. Conduct survey of village residents to find out about demand for buses. To be discussed later in meeting.
3. Continue to monitor situation at tenanted property that is causing local concerns. To be discussed later in meeting.
4. Reinstate footpaths sign. ONGOING
5. Contact bank to discuss setting up dual authorisation online banking. ONGOING

ACTPC 23-04-08 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting: None
- b) To consider any planning applications that have been submitted since agenda was published:
- i) DC/23/01157 – Application for Prior Approval for proposed Demolition of Agricultural Store Building. The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B. Ashfield Place Farm, Main Road, IP14 6LU

Councillors had all studied the application in advance of the meeting. After discussion it was decided to submit **No Comment** to the application.

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

- c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications:
- i) DC/23/00667 – Application to determine in Prior Approval is required for a Proposed: Erection, Extension or Alteration of a building for Agricultural or Forestry Use. Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 6 – Erection of storage building. Ashfield Place Farm, Main Road, IP14 6LU – Conclusion that Formal Approval is Not Required.
 - ii) DC/22/06260 – Householder Application – Erection of single storey extension (following demolition of garage). The Nook, The Street, IP14 6LX - Granted

ACTPC 23-04-09 Parish Council Activities

- a) To review and re-adopt Standing Orders – Upon review the Council agreed that there are no amendments to be made. RH proposed adoption for the coming year, RG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED.** The Clerk will publish the agreed Standing Orders on the village website
- b) Consideration for adoption – Environmental Policy – The Clerk had circulated a policy for consideration. A few amendments were discussed and the Clerk will re-circulate an amended version for consideration at a future meeting.
- c) Management of Ashfield Mail messaging – The type and frequency of communications sent out to the village was discussed. MHa had commented prior to the meeting that it was important not to bombard people with excessive information, to keep the subject line as short and informative as possible and to try and avoid using attachments. CS suggested consolidating the information that is being circulated into a general missive and sending out once a month or so. SG felt that the title of the email needed to cover the subject, which may be difficult if a lot of different items were put together. The Clerk said that sometimes the information is time sensitive, so it would need to go out as it arrived. RH suggested that if action is required from recipients, then this is highlighted in the subject line. All these suggestions will be taken forward and actioned as appropriate, with the matter to be reviewed in a few months.
- d) To review and approve the Bus Survey for distribution to the village – CS had circulated a proposed survey and asked for comment from Councillors before sending it out to the village. RH had downloaded the form, but was unable to fill in the fields. RG felt that the balance and content is right, but it is important to ensure that the mechanics of how to fill in the information is working before it is circulated. RG proposed that the survey is circulated once the functionality is checked, RH seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED.** CS will arrange to send the form out once checked and collate responses as they are received.

Signed  (Clerk)

Signed

 (Chair)

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- e) Highways & Footpaths: Report on activity since the last meeting
- i) Footpaths signs – RH noted that a footpath sign that had rotted and fallen at the edge of a road and will report is using the Suffolk Highways Online Reporting Tool.
- ii) Grove Lane – RG reiterated the comment to MHi that issue of who is responsible for the road surfacing at the end of Grove Lane has now been resolved.
- f) Ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour at residential premises in the village – RG updated the Council on the situation at the property concerned. There has been a further chimney fire (it is understood that the chimney has been condemned and the fireplace should not be used), which had led RG to contact the District Council to find out what could be done to enforce the ban on using the fireplace. RG reported that he is now dealing with the fifth housing officer who has been allocated to this case and felt that the lack of consistency in managing the situation is not helping resolve the many issues. The bonfires in the garden are apparently permitted, even though they have been late at night with no supervision, RG challenged this and is awaiting the result of an investigation. It seems that the residents at the property of concern have made counter complaints against other nearby residents that are now also having to be investigated by the District Council. The issue of the commercial vehicle being parked dangerously on the road seems to have been resolved, but there are a number of other parking issues at the property that are being looked into. Due to privacy laws it is impossible for the District Council to share much information about the situation with the Parish Council, but RG will continue to liaise with the Housing Department and report any concerns raised, so that these can be properly considered
- g) Arrangements for Annual Parish Meeting (to be held 17th April due to Election) – This year the APM will run on a separate evening to the AGM of the Council. The list of attendees was discussed and agreed, Suffolk Police have confirmed they will be attending and presenting a report. The Clerk will issue invites to the village organisations asking for reports to be submitted and publish the agenda.

ACTPC 23-04-10 Finance

- a) To review the Financial Statement as supplied by the Clerk – The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement. There were no queries. RG proposed acceptance, SG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) To review and re-adopt the Financial Regulations - Upon review the Council agreed that there are no amendments to be made. RG proposed adoption for the coming year, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the adopted regulations on the village website.
- c) To agree payments as detailed on the Payment Schedule
RG proposed authorisation, CS seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will issue cheques accordingly.

ACTPC – 23-04-11 Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

- a) SG reported that the dangerously stacked bales alongside a footpath have now been mostly cleared, although there is a heap of loose straw remaining that is about 10-15 ft high. The safety hazard of the risk of falling bales has now been resolved and SG will monitor the situation to see what happens with the loose straw.
- b) Items for next agenda:
 - Audit Matters
 - Way forward to support the Debenham Dementia Project
 - Further consideration of Environmental Policy

Items for the May Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Tuesday 9th May 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 9.22 pm. The next meeting is set for **Monday 15th May 2023** at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall.

Sarah Clare
Parish Clerk

Robert Grimsey
Chair

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