



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 11th March 2020 at the Community Hall.

Attendance Myles Hansen (Chair) (MHa) Ruth Hart (RH) Sarah Clare (Clerk)
Robert Grimsey (Vice-Chair) (RG) Paul Whayman (PW) Simon Garrett (SG)
Kathie Guthrie (District Councillor) (KG)

Public present at the meeting: 1

Public Contributions

None

ACTPC 20-03-01 Reports from County & District 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 points:

The County Council Budget for this year is only a one-year settlement, which unfortunately results in a lack of clarity for future spending, this is why there has been a small Council Tax increase. The settlement is the best achieved since 2010 though, so at the moment there is no plan to look for extra cuts. A specific budget has been set up to address climate change prevention work, this is called the Suffolk 2020 Fund.

The County Council has agreed to borrow £9.8 million to upgrade to LED streetlights county wide. Although this seems a lot of money at the outset the decreased energy use will result in savings in the long run and a reduced carbon footprint. LED bulbs are shown to reduce light pollution as well. It is hoped that the changeover will be complete by August 2022.

Suffolk Highways will also be refreshing signs and lines outside the 345 schools in Suffolk to help improve road safety. This is not new signs and lines, just updating existing provisions to ensure that they are all clear and legible.

Suffolk County Council has agreed to pay for any street closures requested by communities to hold street parties or parades to celebrate VE and VJ day anniversaries in a bid to engage as many communities as possible.

Coronavirus Update – The Director of Public Health for Suffolk County Council, Stuart Keeble, is keen to ensure that the message about hand washing and keeping social distance is spread widely. Everyone is advised to follow guidance issued on the Government's website. If Annual Parish Meetings need to be cancelled or postponed this will be advised.

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.

KG brought attention to the following points:

There is a link on the Mid Suffolk District website to Public Health England website, this is the best place to go for up to date information on the coronavirus.

The Needham Market visitor centre project has had confirmation that the additional funds it requires will be obtained. RG raised a query about why so many of these public projects go up in price after they have started. KG was unable to offer a reason at this time.

Signed (Clerk) Signed (Chair)

RG raised a separate query about unlawful advertising signs, KG stated that there is a policy that she can supply to the Parish Council about the matter, but the Parish Council can remove any signs that are not authorised with no concerns. The worst offenders are regularly approached by the District Council about putting their signs out, but it is difficult to police and enforce.

Although the District Council has lost some of its car-parking revenue from Stowmarket, due to the machines being out of order and difficulties in getting replacement parts, the anticipated revenue for the year is still likely to be up on the previous year.

ACTPC 20-03-02 Apologies for Absence

None

ACTPC 20-03-03 Declaration of Interests

None

ACTPC 20-03-04 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th February 2020 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by PW, seconded by RH and **WERE SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk

ACTPC 20-03-05 Matters Arising and Action Points

- 4.1 Circulate information about the Parish Councillor vacancies on the Ashfield Group Email. DISCHARGED
- 4.2 Check with defibrillator cabinet supplier to see if it should have a light, if it should liaise with electrician to look into the matter. DISCHARGED
- 4.3 Forward proposal for extension of 30 mph speed limit on The Street to Suffolk Highways. To be discussed later in meeting.
- 4.4 Monitor progress of SID installation and chase Suffolk Highways if necessary. DISCHARGED
- 4.5 Modify funding request form to be suitable for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, publish on village website and publicise in the next available village newsletter. DISCHARGED
- 4.6 To distribute payments as approved at the January meeting. DISCHARGED
- 4.7 Submit responses to planning applications considered at the January and February meetings. DISCHARGED

ACTPC 20-03-06 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) Consideration of participation in the Great British Spring Clean 2020 – After discussion it was decided not to participate. This is due to the fact that Ashfield-cum-Thorpe is lucky not to have a serious problem with littering and the Council are appreciative of the parishioners who regularly pick up any small pieces of litter that may be blown into the village.
- c) Consideration of next steps to be taken regarding the application to extend the 30mph speed limit on The Street and the required funding – MHi discussed the matter with the Parish Council. Any requests of this nature should be directed through the County Councillor. Many of the villages in Suffolk experience the same problems and MHi has requested a number of speed limit applications and extensions over the past few years, unfortunately not many have been successful. The statutory regulations are often a sticking point, but the main reason that an application would be successful is a history of accidents. MHi will request a preliminary visit from Suffolk Highways to have an informal assessment of the site before going ahead with a full survey and report, which will cost quite a significant sum of money. If the informal assessment is positive then MHi will fund the application from his Highways budget. The whole process can take a few years and may cost several thousand pounds. There would be a public consultation, involving the police, road users and stakeholders in the lorry network. If no objections are received the

Cabinet member responsible for Highways at Suffolk County Council would be approached, along with the Director of Highways to consider progressing to a Court application.

PW, had approached Suffolk Highways direct on the recommendation of the people installing the SID posts, as he had been advised that MHi was no longer involved in this process. PW will now forward all his correspondence with the Saxmundham depot to MHi to action.

PW reported that the posts for the SID are now in place, but he is waiting to hear when the machine will be in place. Currently the online rota (which shows dates until July) is not including Ashfield-cum-Thorpe. PW will continue to monitor, chase up and report back to the Council.

- d) Consideration of Suffolk Highways Grass Cutting Programme 2020 – After discussion it was agreed that there was no need for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe to contract anyone for additional grass-cutting in the village, the Suffolk Highways programme would be sufficient.
- e) Agreement of Dates for Routine Parish Council Meetings 2020-2021 – It was confirmed that the AGM of the Council, including the APM will take place on Wednesday 27th May, as agreed at the January 2020 meeting. Further meetings of the Council will take place on: Wednesday 9th September 2020, Wednesday 9th December 2020 and Wednesday 10th March 2021. The Clerk will publish the dates on the website.
- f) Preparations for Annual Parish Meeting – The organisations that will be invited to speak and present reports were confirmed to be the same as last year. The Clerk will look at last year's files and make contact to confirm arrangements. MHa and RG offered to help with contacts if necessary.
- g) To review current Standing Orders – Upon review the Council agreed that there are no amendments to be made. RH proposed adoption for the coming year, MHa seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the agreed Standing Orders on the village website.

ACTPC 20-03-07 Finance

- a) To review the financial statement for the quarter – The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement for March. There were no queries. MHa proposed acceptance, RG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) To review and adopt new NALC Financial Regulations - After review RG proposed adoption, SG seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the new regulations on the village website
- c) To agree appointment of Internal Auditor and confirmation of exemption from External Audit for 19-20 – As per the Budget discussion at the December 2019 meeting the Clerk has received confirmation from the retired accountant in Worlingworth, who is well versed in conducting Parish Council internal audits, that he is willing to do the audit for Ashfield-cum-Thorpe.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council's receipts and expenditure were not expected to exceed £25,000 and as such the Council would be able to submit an exemption certificate to the external auditors for financial year ending 31 March 2020. SG proposed the submission, RG seconded all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.

- d) To consider applications for funding as received – None have been submitted
- e) To agree payments as detailed on the Payment Schedule
MHa proposed authorisation, SG seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will issue cheques accordingly.

ACTPC 20-03-08 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting:
 - i) None Received.
 - ii) Any other applications submitted since Agenda published - None

b) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications:

- i) DC/19/04454 – Household Planning Application – erection of workshop and cart-lodge following demolition of shed at Grove Farmhouse, Grove Lane – Granted.
- ii) DC/19/05653 – Householder Planning Application – erection of side and rear extensions at Blacksmiths Cottage, The Street – Granted.

ACTPC 20-03-09 Feedback from External Meeting & Additional Officers' Reports

None

ACTPC – 20-03-10 Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

SG drew the Council's attention to new regulations coming into force from September 2020 about website accessibility. The Ashfield-cum-Thorpe website is hosted by One Suffolk, who have confirmed that their software is compliant and able to be used with screen readers. One Suffolk has confirmed that all their websites are compliant, but asked that users consider accessibility when uploading content to ensure that alternative text is available to photos and that links are fully descriptive. It was noted by the Parish Council that the matter had been considered and that no further action was deemed necessary at this point.

After a short discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council will not be making any announcements on the current Coronavirus outbreak, but direct people to the NHS and Public Health England websites for up to date information.

ACTPC 20-03-11 Items for the May Agenda

- Election of Chairman
- Report on Internal Audit

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 8.45pm. The next meeting is set for **Wednesday 27th May 2020** at 7.30 pm at the Community Hall.

Sarah Clare
Parish Clerk

Myles Hansen
Chair