

# Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council

## Approved Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 December 2017 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall, The Street, Ashfield cum Thorpe

**Present:** Cllr Simon Garrett (Chair), Cllr Robert Grimsey, Cllr Ruth Hart and Cllr Paul Whayman

**Attendance:** Cllr Matthew Hicks (District & County Councillor) and Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk)

**1. Apologies and Approval of Absences**

Apologies were received from Cllr Myles Hansen and Cllr Geoff Hazlewood and their absences were approved. Apologies were also received from Cllr Ann Langley.

**2. Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members**

A non-pecuniary interest in the membership of Ashford Community Council was declared by Cllr Garrett. Consequently, he was excluded from any decision making (6a, 6b and 9f). A non-pecuniary interest in the status of supplier was declared by Cllr Grimsey. Consequently, he was excluded from any decision making (9f).

**3. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 13 September 2017**

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 13 September 2017 were received, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**4. Reports by the District Councillor and County Councillor**

Cllr Hicks delivered his county council report at the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information. He also confirmed in his district council report that forthcoming changes in the district council's ward boundaries could result in a change in the location of the parish from 2018/19.

**5. Contributions by Members of the Public**

Cllr Grimsey highlighted his concern over unclean water on the site of a neighbouring new development which required treatment works. Enquiries could be made with MSDC Planning Enforcement and the Environment Agency.

**6. Purchase of Defibrillator for the Village Hall**

(a) Cllr Garrett confirmed that Ashfield Community Council's funding application to purchase a defibrillator for the village hall had been declined on the grounds of a lack of evidence of community support. Assistance would be available to support the submission of a future application.

(b) Cllr Garrett advised Members that the village hall's floor required substantial repair works as soon as possible. It was agreed that remedial repairs remained an option.

**7. Consideration of the Installation of Vehicle Activated Signs**

Cllr Hart queried the viability of the introduction of a vehicle activation signs scheme within the village. Cllr Hicks explained the existence of a waiting list for SCC supported schemes. He confirmed the possibility of qualifying funding to be made available by his locality fund. The Parish Clerk agreed to make a formal request for a survey to take place. Members agreed to discuss this item further at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2018.

**8. Consideration of Planning Applications and Decision Notices**

There were no planning applications requiring comment and there were no decision notices for noting by Members.

**9. Finance**

(a) Cashbook, income, expenditure and budget reports of activity to 30 November 2017 were reviewed and noted.

(b) The MSDC Precept payment of £850.00 received on 25 September 2017 was noted.

(c) The Transparency Code funding payment of £548.65 received on 30 November 2017 was noted.

(d) Approval of the bank reconciliation of activity to 30 November 2017 was proposed by Cllr Hart, seconded by Cllr Grimsey and agreed by Members.

(e) The Parish Clerk confirmed that cheque signing status was held by Cllr Garrett, Cllr Hansen and Cllr Hazlewood.

(f) Payments were authorised in favour of the Parish Clerk's wages and office and personal expenses (£863.10), Suffolk Association of Local Councils for payroll services to September 2017 (£21.60), BDO LLP for external audit services for 2016/17 (£36.00), Local Council Public Advisory Service for the Parish Clerk's attendance on a GDPR course (£7.50), Ashfield Community Council for a grant for One Suffolk's web site costs, and telephone box bulbs (£45.98), and Robert Grimsey for notice board removal and relocation, labour and materials (£152.50). Approval of these payments was proposed by Cllr Hart, seconded by Cllr Whayman and agreed by Members.

(g) Approval of the notice of conclusion of the External Audit 2016/17, including the report identifying three minor issues received from BDO, and the finalised Annual Return was proposed by Cllr Grimsey, seconded by Cllr Hart and agreed by Members.

(h) Approval to appoint Suffolk Association of Local Councils as the Council's Internal Auditor for 2017/18 was proposed by Cllr Grimsey, seconded by Cllr Hart and agreed by Members.

(i) A draft budget was presented to Members by the Parish Clerk which was then discussed and concluded with the setting of a precept of £2,700 for 2018/19 to be requested from Mid Suffolk District Council. Approval of the final budget and setting of the precept was proposed by Cllr Hart, seconded by Cllr Whayman and agreed by Members.

**10. Governance**

(a) The Parish Clerk updated Members on his attendance at a GDPR Training Course in Woodbridge on 1 November 2017. An assessment was required to take place of the extent to which the Council would be affected and the courses of action needing to be taken.

(b) The Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct, updated by the Parish Clerk, were reviewed by Members. Approval and adoption of these documents was proposed by Cllr Garrett, seconded by Cllr Grimsey and agreed by Members.

(c) The Parish Clerk presented the Council's Internal Control Statement for 2017/18 which was reviewed by Members. Approval and adoption of this document was proposed by Cllr Garrett, seconded by Cllr Hart and agreed by Members.

**11. Matters for Future Consideration**

(a) Agreement of the Dates of Parish Council Meetings (April 2018 - March 2019)

**12. Date of the Next Meeting**

(a) 14 March 2018 (Agenda Items & Documents Received by 6 March 2018)

(b) The meeting finished at 9.25pm.

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk

[actpc.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:actpc.clerk@gmail.com)

14 March 2018

## December 2017 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

### **Suffolk County Council's Children's Services continue to improve following Ofsted pilot inspection**

Suffolk County Council was a pilot recently for the new Ofsted inspection framework. All areas are now judged to be 'Good'. This puts SCC in the top 25% of all Local Authorities. Inspectors were positive about every part of Children's Services, the quality of work with children, and the passion and commitment of everyone they met. Their report highlights that: "The local authority's commitment to children and families is clear and unambiguous... Staff know children well and are passionate about changing their lives." Key points made by Ofsted in the report recognise the work of the authority in the following areas: **Early Help:** Early help is making a positive difference to the lives of children and families Children and families benefit from a good range of early help services. **Social Care & Safeguarding:** The children and adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is well established. It is appropriately resourced and well managed. Thresholds are applied consistently. Information is shared appropriately. Decision-making is timely. The way in which the local authority has rolled out its preferred social work model across all children and young people's services is extremely impressive. The model is encouraging social workers and other staff to work more effectively with families. **Children in Care:** The local authority makes good use of its legal powers and acts decisively to protect children who are unable to continue to live at home safely. Social workers clearly understand the importance of achieving permanence for children in care. The emphasis is always on finding the right long-term solution for each child. **Strong Leadership:** Senior managers lead by example. They want the best for children, young people and families. They set and expect high standards of themselves and others. They understand the importance of getting the basics right but are not afraid to innovate. **Partnership working:** Partnership working, particularly with the police and with health services, is strong. This is evident in the way in which the MASH has developed. It is also apparent in the role played by health partners in early help. Working closely with other agencies, the local authority has strengthened its response to missing children and child sexual exploitation.

### **Suffolk home to school transport consultation to be reconsidered**

Proposals to consult Suffolk residents on changing the way home to school and post-16 travel is provided was reconsidered by Suffolk County Council on Tuesday 5 December. Over the last two years, SCC has managed to save £2.6 million from its school and post-16 travel service budget, making it more efficient. Despite this, the budget is still £3 million overspent. Changes to the school and post-16 travel policies now need to be considered so the service is affordable and capable of meeting growing demand in the future. SCC's current school and post-16 travel policies go above legal requirements, with around 2400 children and young people receiving free/subsidised school or post-16 travel that we are not legally required to provide, and around 2400 children receiving free travel to schools further away than legally required. On 12 September 2017, SCC's Cabinet approved a public consultation on school and post-16 travel. This was subsequently reviewed by the council's Scrutiny Committee and referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration. SCC has now carried out additional pre-consultation work with schools, parents, parish councils, bus/coach operators, councillors and young people to look at the challenges in further detail. As part of this, a range of local solutions have been developed that in addition to changing the school and post-16 travel policies, could help reduce the cost of transport and some of the impact of any policy changes. The consultation on the proposals will run until 28 February 2018. The findings will be reported back to Cabinet along with a recommendation on the future school and post-16 travel policies. Any decision to change the policies would be made so that they can be implemented from September 2019 onward. [www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/school-and-post-16-travel-consultation/](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/school-and-post-16-travel-consultation/)

### **Fully funded first-time central heating systems for Suffolk residents**

Suffolk's local authorities are now able to provide fully funded central heating systems subject to survey to 514 fuel poor households across Suffolk over the next three years. Around 4 million UK households are in fuel poverty, unable to affordably heat their home to the temperature needed to stay warm and healthy. As well as being on low incomes many of these households are also faced with the additional burden of relying on heating systems that are inefficient and expensive to run. The local authorities in Suffolk have a long track record of securing funding to support our most vulnerable residents. This project will enable us to make a practical, long lasting difference to improve their living conditions and make their homes more affordable to heat. Anyone who does not have a central heating system and finds it a challenge to afford their energy bills should contact Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People on 03456 037686 quoting the Warm Homes Fund. It will fund the installation of affordable heating solutions in fuel poor households which don't use mains gas as their primary source of heat.

**Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division**

**E-mail :** [matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk)