

# Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council

## Approved Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 7.00pm at the Village Hall, The Street, Ashfield cum Thorpe

**Present:** Cllr Geoff Hazlewood (Chair), Cllr Simon Garrett (Vice-Chair), Cllr Robert Grimsey, Cllr Myles Hansen, Cllr Ruth Hart and Cllr Ann Langley

**Attendance:** Cllr Matthew Hicks (District & County Councillor), Malcolm Pease (Chair of Ashfield cum Thorpe Community Council) and Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk)

1. **Apologies and Approval of Absences**  
All councillors were in attendance at the meeting.
2. **Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Councillors**  
There were no interests declared by any of the Councillors.
3. **Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 28 June 2016**  
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on 28 June 2016 were received, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.
4. **Matters Arising**  
There were no matters arising which had not been included elsewhere on the agenda.
5. **Audit Results**  
The Chair presented the report received from BDO LLP which identified issues arising from the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2016. A risk assessment had not been carried out as part of the Council's review of the effectiveness of internal control, grant monies received had been recorded in the wrong box and the role of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) had been taken on by a Councillor rather than an officer. It was agreed that arrangements would be made to post the report on the web site and carry out a risk assessment and for the annual return to be correctly completed in 2016/17. It was agreed that the role of RFO would be taken on by the new Parish Clerk.
6. **Appointment of Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer**  
The Chair introduced Simon Ashton, in attendance at the meeting, and recommended that he take on the role of Parish Clerk and RFO. The recommendation was accepted by the Councillors.

**7. Community Council's Web Site**

An agreement was reached with the Chair of the Community Council, in attendance at the meeting, to continue with the onesuffolk web site hosted by CAS and for the Secretary of the Community Council to register this intention online with CAS by the deadline of 1 November 2016. It was also agreed to apply for the funding of £36 (£30 plus VAT), offered by Cllr Hicks from his locality budget, which represented the first year's costs to 31 October 2017. Cllr Hicks agreed that the funding would need to be awarded to the Parish Council in accordance with the scheme's rules. The Parish Clerk agreed to make the necessary application and to co-ordinate the award of the subsequent grant to the Community Council once an invoice had been received and a request had been made. Cllr Garrett agreed to upload the previous meeting's minutes to the web site and to provide the Parish Clerk with the necessary access to maintain the Parish Council's pages. The Parish Clerk also agreed to update the web site with a newly set up Council email address.

**8. Purchase of a Defibrillator for Village Use**

The Parish Clerk agreed to investigate the purchase of a defibrillator for village use and the funding opportunities available, including the Community Heartbeat Trust.

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

There were no issues raised by members of the public.

**10. Report by the District & County Councillor**

Cllr Hicks delivered his report at the meeting. A copy the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information. The Parish Clerk agreed to share the Council's new email address with Cllr Hicks which would be used to facilitate the future distribution of the Trading Standards newsletters.

**11. Finance**

a) It was agreed to update the Council's bank mandate in accordance with its cheque signing requirements and for future bank statements to be sent to the Parish Clerk. Cllr Garrett agreed to co-ordinate the collection of identification documents from the new signatories and the completion of an updated mandate form to make the changes.

b) The payment of £151.47 was approved in favour of Business Services at CAS Ltd for annual Parish Council insurance.

**12. Matters for Consideration at the Next Meeting**

It was agreed to include the precept and budget and the effectiveness of internal control in the form of a risk assessment. The refurbishment and relocation of the Council's notice board and the installation of vehicle activated signs in the village would also be included which would be subject to costs, surveys and funding contributions being investigated. The meeting finished at 8.15pm.

**13. Dates of the Next Meetings**

(a) 11 January 2017

(b) 8 March 2017 (Consideration)

(c) 10 May 2017 (AGM/APM)

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk

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11 January 2017

## October 2016 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

### Devolution outcomes considered by Norfolk and Suffolk leaders

The outcomes of the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution consultation have been considered by council ahead of submission to the Secretary of State. Throughout the consultation period, councils and the New Anglia LEP engaged with a wide range of people including town and parish councils, councillors, businesses, members of the public and partner organisations, such as health and higher education. More than 10,000 responses were received via a range of channels. The majority of responses, 6080, were received via a telephone survey carried out by Ipsos-Mori, gaining views from a cross section of people, reflecting the population of the two counties.

- 53% supported the principle of devolution
- There was strong support for more decisions to be taken locally across a range of issues with decisions relating road maintenance funding coming out on top
- There was 52% support for a Mayor and 58% support for councils to come together as a Combined Authority. 29% Opposed election of a Mayor and 25% opposed establishing a Combined Authority
- Job creation and young people either earning or learning came out as top priorities to invest in

250 businesses of various sizes across the two counties were also surveyed by Mori:

- 54% supported the principle of devolution
- Strong support for more decisions to be taken locally across a arrange of issues with decisions relating road maintenance funding coming out on top
- 59% supported councils joining as a Combined Authority and 47% supportive of a mayor, with 27% opposed
- Young people earning or learning was businesses top priority for the Combined Authority to invest in

In addition, the New Anglia LEP in conjunction with the Norfolk and Suffolk Chambers of Commerce held a series of breakfast briefings during July and the Chambers of Commerce also produced their own e-newsletters. This activity has resulted in a number of business leaders sending letters to government supporting devolution. The survey was also available via the East Anglia Devolution website and council websites and more than 2900 people responded. The survey was open to everyone but the results show that certain groups and geographical areas were better represented than others. For example, less than 5% of responses came from under 24's when in reality they make up more than 25% of the two counties' population. Response levels were also not evenly spread across the various borough and district areas. Whilst there was less support for a mayor or combined authority through the self-service survey, more than 50% of people responding supported the principle of devolution. Again, strong support for more decisions to be taken locally with road maintenance coming out top and investment by the Combined Authority in transport and broadband infrastructure ranked highest. It is important to be clear that a Norfolk and Suffolk mayor would not be an 'all powerful' figure, making decisions without regard to the views of others. The Mayor would need support from other members of the Combined Authority for plans to progress. A summary of all responses will be reported to the Secretary of State once it has been considered signed off by Leaders. If the Secretary of State thinks that the necessary statutory tests have been met, he will lay a draft order before Parliament.

### Blue Light Property Sharing in Suffolk

Plans for blue light property sharing based around Felixstowe and Saxmundham fire stations have now been agreed by the Blue Light Executive Board, which is overseeing plans for increased collaboration between our emergency services in Suffolk. Building work, subject to planning consent, should start in September and October 2016 respectively, to accommodate local Police teams at the fire stations. The facilities will also be available, where desired, as 'drop-in' bases for ambulance crews. Feasibility studies are also being undertaken to determine whether sharing is advantageous in Beccles, Leiston, Stowmarket, Mildenhall, Newmarket and Sudbury. These projects, where supported, are likely to be taken forward from 2017. A feasibility study is now well underway to establish the best location, in the centre of Ipswich, for a blue light response base for Fire, Police and Ambulance. Other partners' requirements are also being sought with a view to optimising the use of the property. Options include redeveloping the current Princes Street fire station site or, instead, constructing a new building at an alternative location close to the town centre. The above works are substantially funded by the £4.93m DCLG transformation grant, received by the Council in 2014-15, and Home Office funding provided to Suffolk Constabulary.

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

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