

STANSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th July 2020 via Zoom

Councillors present: Sarah Hopkins (Chairman), Ed Cardozo (Vice-chairman), Fran Brown, Julie Ghirardani, Fay Gridley and Robert Dennis

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk) and District and County Councillor Mary Evans and 7 members of the public

Open Forum

Sunila Osborne, Community Development Officer - Rural Affordable Housing, for Community Action Suffolk gave a short presentation about the process of carrying out a Housing Needs Survey.

Community Action Suffolk works with local authority partners on a regular basis, for example parishes hoping to bring housing forward, or for the purpose of Neighbourhood plans. The survey is updated regularly to conform with national planning policies.

The survey is made up of three parts. Part one contains generic information about the household, the number of occupants, age categories, type of houses, the types of equity, how long people have lived there, to help build up a picture of whether people are happy where they live. The results will provide information about what types of property are needed. The questionnaire will also ask for opinions about housing and whether residents would support any future development. Is the household in favour of any further development and what types of housing would they like to see, for example smaller properties, bungalows?

Part two is for anyone currently living in the parish who has a housing need. It includes questions on the type of property they would like to move into or downsize into, financial info, affordability.

Part three is for people who would like to return to the parish because they have a local connection, for example children who would like to move back. These people would need to be contacted via word of mouth. A household can complete part three on behalf of someone who has moved away or request an additional form from the Parish Council or CAS

The surveys will be hand delivered to every household in the parish. CAS recommends that the surveys are distributed to all households at the same time over a weekend. The closing date for returning the surveys is usually two weeks after the surveys have been delivered though a longer timescale is possible.

All households are encouraged to complete part one and any other relevant parts. It is important to have good publicity. Households would need to be advised through websites, newsletters, covering letters about how it will benefit the community. Updates can be provided throughout the process.

Forms are sent directly to CAS to ensure that they are confidential. Each survey has a separate code to ensure that there is no duplication.

Once the surveys have been returned and the closing date reach, the data will be inputted by CAS (this takes 5-6 weeks), then the data will be analysed, and a full report produced. It will also include a summary. The information is shared with the local authority.

If the PC feels that enough need has been identified, the next stage would be to look at potential or available sites in the community and ways to bring housing forward.

The main action for the Parish Council at this stage is good publicity about the survey.

Questions:

Will the survey pick up need for people who may not require affordable housing but have a different housing need? Yes

How much would it cost? *The cost of the HNS is:*

- £1.75 + VAT for printing & stationery which includes the survey, covering letters, an SAE for return to CAS. They only invoice for those surveys which have been returned.
- £1.75 + VAT for data inputting of any HNS returned via post.
- £2,000 + VAT for copy of full report

Can people fill in part of the survey only? Yes, every question in the survey is optional. Households should be encouraged to complete as many questions as possible, but the surveys will be accepted no matter how many questions are answered.

Would the Parish Council need to provide a covering letter? Yes, the Parish Council would provide a covering letter. It should encourage people to complete part one, even if they are not in need. It is not being undertaken to make changes, but to find out if there is a need and what people feel about future growth. A HNS is carried out for the benefit of the community.

Can questions be added to the survey if a community wants to find something out. Yes, but CAS does not recommend that questions be removed from the survey.

Do they look at possible locations for housing? Yes, part of the survey will ask for any suggested sites.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from John Underdown.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests

Robert Dennis declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 14a on the agenda.

3. Approval of minutes of extraordinary meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June and the planning meeting held on Monday 8th June 2020

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

4. County Councillor's Report

Mary Evans sent through a written report prior to the meeting.

5. District Councillor's Report

Mary Evans sent through a written report prior to the meeting.

She spoke about the proposed litter pick on the agenda. Because of COVID 19, West Suffolk Council is not loaning out litter pickers and hoops. If communities undertake one, it should be in family groups only. WSC will collect the rubbish. People must wear gloves and use litter pickers.

She was going to use some of her locality funding for a village meeting but as this will not happen, she will divert the money to help fund the HNS. Mary Evans agreed to give £1,000 towards the cost of the HNS.

6. Police issues

17 dogs and puppies were stolen from a boarding kennel near Barton Mills. An attempt was also made to steal a dog from the owner on Warren Hill near Newmarket. Coloured strings are being used by thieves to identify properties where a dog is worth stealing.

7. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting

There were two outstanding councillor actions.

A working party has agreed to trim the Chapel Burial Ground. The hedge needs cutting too. A date was set for Saturday 19th September 2020.

8. Finance

a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- J P Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972, s111 – **£4.50**

John Underdown and Fran Brown signed the Schedule of Payments. The Chairman countersigned it.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings

c) Receipts and Payments (including online payments) made since the last meeting

Receipts

Date	Bank	Description	Total
08/06/2020	Barclays reserve account	Bank interest received	£0.81
			£0.81

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
19/05/2020	141/13a	Clerk's expenses	Ms J Kirk	£30.71
19/05/2020	141/13a	Donation	Stansfield Village Hall	£600.00
19/05/2020	141/13a	Broadband for village hall	Stansfield Village Hall	£168.00
30/05/2020	142/13f	Clerk's salary	Ms J Kirk	
04/06/2020	147/4a	Subscription	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£138.90
11/06/2020	142/13f	Pension payment	Risby Parish Council	£10.00
30/06/2020	142/13f	Clerk's salary	Ms J Kirk	
				£1,421.85

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

a) Bank balance as of 8th July 2020 and confirmation of bank reconciliation

Barclays current account	£4,809.67
Barclays reserve account	£3,004.02
Total in Banks	£7,813.69

John Underdown verified and signed the bank statements.

d) Signatory to complete the checklist of Internal Controls

John Underdown completed and signed the checklist of internal controls.

e) Internal auditor's Report

No issues were raised by the Internal Auditor Cathy Whitaker and the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20 has been completed. The clerk has submitted the Certificate of Exemption to the external auditor PFK Littlejohn.

f) Approval of the continued use of electronic banking

It was resolved that the Parish Council would continue to use electronic banking.

g) Disposal of Parish Council documents

It was resolved that the clerk would be authorised to spend up to £60 to dispose of parish council documents with the cost split between her six councils.

h) Actions required following the inspection of Council property

Item	Condition	Action
Village sign	Generally fine. A little wobbly if shook.	This may be rectified by tightening the bolts. Would need a large socket and probably some plus gas to lubricate the bolts.
Bench seat	Generally fine. Gives a little when sat on.	Would benefit from a sand and re paint/stain, to ensure the life of the bench.
1 x dog bin	Generally Fine. Looks like it had been emptied fairly recently. Sign peeling slightly.	Apply new sticker.
1 x dog bin	Weeds and grass surrounding bin very overgrown, making it a little tricky to get to. Bin itself – no concerns, looks to have been emptied fairly recently.	Strim / clear grass and weeds from around bin to ensure clear access. VH one has been strimmed.
3 x grit bins	<p>a) No Concerns – full of grit.</p> <p>b) Bin itself – no concerns, full of grit. Overgrown grass and weeds surrounding bin make it very difficult to access.</p> <p>c) Bin – bowed open at the front and is not shutting. Open to the elements. Full of grit.</p>	<p>a) No actions</p> <p>b) Strim / clear overgrown grass and weeds from around bin.</p> <p>c) Potential could clear grit and re shape bin to get lid to fit.</p>

Phone box	No concerns -	General maintenance - Clean windows and bird poo from paint work to sustain longevity
Chapel Burial Ground	Very overgrown, hedges and grass. Gate into the grounds does not move due to overgrowth. Was difficult to inspect further due to length of grass and weeds.	Trim hedge, strim/clear weeds and grass.
Memorial bench	Bench itself – no concerns. Overgrown grass and weeds under and around bench prevent the bench from being accessed and sat on.	Strim / clear grass and weeds from around and under bench - done

As some parts of the village have been strimmed since the inspection took place, Fran Brown agreed to check and update the list of actions required. Sarah Hopkins agreed to clean the phone box.

9. Planning

- a) **DC/20/1026/VAR - The Retreat, Plough Hill, Stansfield - Variation of Condition 3 (approved drawings) of application DC/16/0217/FUL to enable the relocation of dwelling and cart lodge as per drawing no. 4089-01-C**
It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

10. To review the following policy documents

a) Financial Regulations

It was resolved that the following amendment would be made to section 4.5:

~~*In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, The clerk in conjunction with the Chairman may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.*~~

NALC has not yet issued advice regarding their model financial regulations, however it was resolved that following footnotes would be added to the bottom of **section 11** to show the correct thresholds for contracts:

Section 11 – Contracts

The footnotes should now read

- b) **For public supply and public service contracts £189,330**
c) **For public works contracts £4,733,252**

d) Standing Orders

It was resolved that the following amendments would be made:

- Section 1a - A public forum will be held at the start of the meeting at which members of the public are invited to speak to councillors *about any items on the agenda.*
- Section 1a - *If public meetings are not allowed (as for example during the Coronavirus outbreak in 2020), remote meetings will be held via Zoom. Members of the public can request the meeting login details and join the meeting. A public forum will be held at the start of the meeting at which members of the public are invited to speak to councillors about any items on the agenda.*
- Section 4d - ***If a member reasonably believes another member is in breach of the Code of Conduct, that member is under a duty to report the breach to the Monitoring Officer at West Suffolk Council***

It was also resolved the following amendments would be made as recommended by NALC:

- Section 17 – Financial controls and Procurement (parts f and g)
f) ***A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £189,330 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,733,252 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant***

procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.

- g) A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £378,660 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,733,252 for a works contract; or £663,540 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

e) Equal Opportunities Policy

It was resolved that no amendments were necessary.

11. Approval of the following policy documents

a) Procedure for handling requests for information

It was resolved that the Procedure for Handling Requests for Information would be approved and uploaded onto the website.

b) Persistent and vexatious complaints and correspondence policy

It was resolved that the Persistent and Vexatious Complaints and Correspondence Policy would be approved and uploaded onto the website

c) Filming and recording at meetings policy

It was resolved that the Filming and Recording at Meetings Policy would be approved and uploaded onto the website.

d) The role of the Parish Council in dealing with planning application

It was resolved that the explanation of the role of the Parish Council in dealing with planning applications would be approved and uploaded onto the website.

e) Email policy for councillors

It was resolved that the Email Policy would be approved and uploaded onto the website and that councillors would set up separate accounts for Parish Council emails, if they do not have them already.

12. Highways/Rights of Way issues/tree/transport issues

No issues were raised.

13. Local Government Association (LGA) consultation on a new model member code of conduct.

It was resolved that no comments would be submitted.

14. Village issues

a) The possibility of carrying out a Housing Needs Study through Community Action Suffolk

Stansfield Parish Council has received two requests to carry out a Housing Needs Survey.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would commission a Housing Needs Survey with a view to delivering the questionnaires for completion in the last week of August and the first week of September (subject to confirmation of proposed dates by CAS). The clerk agreed to contact CAS to commission the survey.

The cost of the survey will be covered by a grant of £1,000 from Mary Evans and the Parish Council's own funds initially with any shortfall being recouped in the next budget or by applying for grants.

It was also resolved that a working party would be set up to prepare any publicity and any other actions relating to the HNS. Sarah Hopkins, Julie Ghirardani and Fran Brown agreed to join the working party along with the clerk.

15. Correspondence

a) Email from Mary Evans about a possible village COVID 19 project

It was resolved that this item would be deferred until the September meeting.

b) Email from a resident about a possible breach of the Suffolk Code of Conduct

West Suffolk Council has confirmed that the Code of Conduct was not breached.

c) Email from a resident about SHELAA sites in Stansfield and producing a Neighbourhood Plan

It was resolved that no response would be made until West Suffolk Council has published the new Settlement Hierarchy in the Issues and Options Consultation in October 2020.

It was resolved that no decision would be made about a Neighbourhood Plan at this stage as the HNS would be a sensible place to start and that any discussions about a Neighbourhood Plan would be deferred until the results of the Housing Needs Survey are known.

d) Email from a resident about Neighbourhood Planning

See 15c above.

e) Email from a resident asking a number of questions relating to the minutes of the meeting on 18th May and Neighbourhood Planning

See 15c above

16. Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda

The following items will be discussed at the September meeting:

- A review the clerk's position – closed session
- Review of the situation with regard to persistent complaints – closed session
- Planning application DC/20/1107/HH. A planning meeting will be held on Monday 3rd August at 6.30pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.53pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated