

Belstead Parish Council

Approved Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8 January 2020 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Belstead

Present: Cllr Richard Clift (Chair), Cllr Trevor Beckett (Vice-Chair), Cllr Christine Eade, Cllr Ken Stowe and Incoming Cllr Chris Markham (see 8d)

Attendance: Cllr Christopher Hudson (County Councillor), Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk) and two Members of the Public

1. Apologies and Approval of Absences

The meeting started at 7.35pm. There were no apologies and absences for approval as all Members were present.

2. Declarations of Interests by Members & Requests for Dispensation

Members noted a non-pecuniary interest declared by Cllr Clift, Cllr Eade and Cllr Stowe (Item 7h).

3. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 13 November 2019

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 13 November 2019 were received and approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. Reports by the District Councillor and County Councillor

Cllr Jane Gould (District Councillor) did not attend the meeting. Cllr Christopher Hudson (County Councillor) delivered his report at the meeting. A copy of the report has been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

5. Contributions by Members of the Public

There were no issues raised by members of the public.

6. Consideration of Planning Applications and Decision Notices

(a) BDC DC/19/05220: Application Received (Comments Overdue 5 December 2020)
South of Belstead, Bentley Lane, Belstead, IP8 3LX

Members noted that comments had not been submitted in this case.

(b) BDC DC/19/05491: Application Received (Comments Due 10 January 2020)
Woodville Cottage, The Street, Belstead, IP8 3LY

Members agreed that they did not object to this planning application.

(c) BDC DC/19/05855: Application Received (Comments Due 24 January 2020)
Street Farm, The Street, Belstead, IP8 3LY

Members agreed that they did not object to this planning application.

7. Finance

- (a) Members noted the receipt of Barclays Bank interest payments totalling £9.49 during the period from June to December 2019.
- (b) Members noted the receipt of an HMRC VAT Refund (2018/19) (£847.24) on 30 December 2019.
- (c) Members noted the Barclays Bank Community account balance of £19,799.59 and the Business Instant account balance of £6,353.16 as at 31 December 2019.
- (d) The receipts and budget report and payments and budget report to 31 December 2019 were reviewed and noted by Members.
- (e) The bank reconciliation of activity to 31 December 2019 was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (f) Following approval of the items on the checklist and the appointment of a lead by Members, the Parish Clerk agreed to contact Fran Hartley to book time for the completion of the internal controls checklist for 2019/20. It was agreed to report the findings of the review to Members at the Council's meeting in March 2020.
- (g) The official form to request the Council's approved precept of £7,000 from Babergh District Council for 2020/21 by 31 January 2020 was signed by the Chair, Cllr Stowe, Cllr Beckett and the Parish Clerk.
- (h) Members considered a request received from Belstead Village Hall for a grant for £3,140 to have the floor re-sanded and sealed as part the current refurbishment project. A copy of the quotation provided was reviewed. Following approval in principle, Members requested that a further quotation be obtained for consideration at the next meeting. The Parish Clerk agreed to contact and update the applicant.
- (i) Members considered a request received from Belstead Carpet Bowls Club for a grant for £896.95 to purchase a double mat handling unit. A breakdown of the costs was provided which included the unit, four straps, storage cover, delivery and assembly. Following discussion by Members and the Parish Clerk's input on the acquisition of the equipment, approval was granted on the basis that the Council made the purchase directly with the supplier, donated the equipment to the club and reclaimed the VAT. The Parish Clerk agreed to check the validity of this approach before proceeding and to contact and update the applicant.
- (j) Members agreed not to approve the donation request received from Headway Suffolk.
- (k) Members agreed not to approve the donation request received from Neighbourhood Watch Suffolk.
- (l) Members gave their approval for the Section 137 payment of £63.00 for three Remembrance Sunday wreaths committed on 28 October 2019.
- (m) Payments were authorised in favour of the Parish Clerk's wages and office and personal expenses (£428.11), Belstead Village Hall for venue hire (13 November 2019) (£25.00), D E Cobley for reimbursement for three Remembrance Sunday wreaths and refreshments (£73.00), SWARCO Traffic Ltd for the annual SID maintenance contract (to 12 November 2020) (£381.60) and Cardiac Science Holdings (UK) Ltd for a defibrillator, accessories, delivery and installation (£2,208.00). Approval of these payments was agreed by Members subject to confirmation being received that the defibrillator had been installed and registered with the authorities.

8. Governance

- (a) Members discussed further the matter of a shortfall in the recommended GDPR documentation requiring use and recommended in the internal audit report. The recommended lead was not appointed at the meeting to take the matter forward.
- (b) There was confirmation that the defibrillator had been delivered and that it was awaiting installation and registration. It had already been agreed to postpone the requested payment until these stages had been reached and confirmed (see 7m).
- (c) Members approved the final version of the Parish Clerk's employment contract which was signed by both the Chair and the Parish Clerk.
- (d) Following an introduction, discussion and conclusion to qualification considerations, Members approved the co-option of Chris Markham as a Member of the Council. The Parish Clerk confirmed that arrangements would be made for the BDC register of interests to be completed as soon as possible and for an acceptance of office form to be completed before the next meeting.
- (e) The Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations presented by the Parish Clerk were reviewed, discussed and adopted by Members.

9. Highways

- (a) The matter of a replacement HGV sign was discussed by Members. Cllr Stowe agreed to look into the price of a sign on the basis that the Council would make the purchase. Cllr Hudson had previously explained an opportunity for locality funding for this purpose.
- (b) There was confirmation of no further news to report in consideration of the A14 noise pollution. It was agreed to remove this matter from the agenda unless there was news.
- (c) Members discussed arrangements and costs for the cutting of overgrown hedges in the village. Members agreed that the Chair would make the arrangements and approved a maximum of £120 for the work. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

10. Consultations

- (a) Following discussion, Members agreed not to submit a response to the SALC Planning Questionnaire consultation by the due date of 31 January 2020.

11. Matters for Future Consideration

- (a) Review of Implementation of Internal Audit Report Action Plan (2018/19)
- (b) Confirmation of the Booking of the Internal Audit (2019/20) (April 2020)
- (c) Approval of the Council's External Audit Reporting Exemption Status (2019/20)
- (d) Approval of the Parish Clerk's Annual Salary Scale Change (1 March 2020)
- (e) Approval of RFO's Attendance at SALC Preparing for Audit Course (21 January 2020)
- (f) Review & Approval of the Parish Council's Annual Risk Assessment (2019/20)
- (g) Review & Approval of the Parish Council's Internal Control Statement (2019/20)
- (h) Consideration of the Council's Future Subscription to Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- (i) Consideration of Any Action Relating to the Open Space/Local Nature Reserve
- (j) Agreement of the Dates of the Council's Meetings & Draft Agendas (2020/21)
- (k) Agreement of the Date of the Annual Parish Meeting & Draft Agenda (May 2020)

12. Date of the Next Meeting

- (a) 25 March 2020 (Agenda Items & Documents Received by 17 March 2020)

(b) The meeting finished at 9.50pm.

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk
belstead.pc@btinternet.com
13 May 2020



December 2019 Monthly Parish Newsletter

New SEND provision identified – ready to offer 168 additional spaces from September 2020

Suffolk County Council is now in a position to provide further information regarding the development of new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) units attached to mainstream schools in the county. The authority is very pleased to announce that, following a thorough evaluation process, a number of suitable schools have been identified to develop:

- **Two Generic Key Stage 1 Units** – Pipers Vale Primary Academy and Burton End Primary Academy
- **Three Communication and Interaction Key Stage 2 Units** – Murrayfield Primary Academy, Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy, and Causton Junior School
- **One Cognition and Learning Key Stage 2 Unit** – Clements Primary Academy
- **Three Communication and Interaction Key Stage 3/4 Units** – Copleston High School, Ixworth School, and Newmarket Academy
- **One Cognition and Learning Key Stage 3/4 Unit** – Castle Manor Primary Academy.

In total, this means an additional 168 new specialist placements will be available for children and their families in Suffolk from September 2020, on top of existing specialist provision. Successful schools are currently working with the council to ensure the appropriate infrastructure and support is in place to enable these new units to be open in September 2020.

A further commissioning round will begin in Spring 2020 and will consider further expressions of interest from mainstream schools who hope to open units in September 2021. This will include targeted work from our provider development team in areas of the county where gaps have been identified to ensure we are able to offer local provision for our children and their families.

Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills, Cllr Mary Evans said:

“We are delighted with the interest shown by our mainstream schools and would like to thank all those who came forward wanting to work in partnership to deliver this provision. If you are a mainstream school that would like to become involved, or would like further information, there is still time.

“Regular updates will follow as we continue to work hard in the delivery of our capital programme across the next five years, resulting in an additional 870 specialist places.”

Please contact Jamie Mills Jamie.mills@suffolk.gov.uk for further information if your school is interested in developing a SEND unit.

The council is very pleased to work in partnership with the Suffolk Parent Carer Network and a spokesperson for the Network, said: “The development of new specialist education placements is something that SPCN continue to be involved in at all stages, with the parent carer voice & feedback we have received being an integral part of the specialist unit provision process.

“To see so many providers coming forward saying they want to be part of the solution gives us real hope that we are now on our way to having an education offer that meets the needs of Suffolk's most vulnerable learners and we look forward to working alongside all partners in the future developments of the Capital Programme.”

David Waters jailed for 2 years and 8 months for misleading vulnerable customers

On 19 December, Suffolk businessman David Waters (71 of Manwick Road, Felixstowe) received a 32-month custodial sentence.

He has also been banned from being a company director for 10 years and been made the subject of a criminal behaviour order, which prevents him from selling any products in a person's home and any involvement in a mobility aid company.

His company, Anchor Mobility Ltd, was also fined a total of £15,000 for 15 counts of unfair commercial practice, following a successful prosecution by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards.

Mr Waters failed to fulfil orders and refused to refund customers in his position as sole director of Anchor Mobility Limited, a company meant to provide life-improving furniture to vulnerable and elderly people.

Instead, many customers received no goods, no refunds and poor customer service. One customer paid over £8,000 for two beds, which were never delivered, and no refund was ever received.

A hearing to consider compensation for victims will take place in the new year.

On 31 October 2019, a jury found Mr Waters and Anchor Mobility Limited guilty on 31 counts following a three-week trial at Ipswich Crown Court. Offences included fraudulent trading under the Companies Act 2006, engaging in unfair commercial practices, multiple offences of misleading consumers by taking large deposits with the promise of delivering goods without doing so, and failing to refund consumers under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

On sentencing Mr Waters, Judge Peters said:

“This case is about people. The continuing and constant theme in victims' statements is that these weren't rich people in large houses who could afford to lose thousands of pounds. These people suffered and can't afford to buy another chair or bed. They were all left feeling very stupid as a result of being taken in. They shouldn't feel stupid, they were taken in and they are not alone.

“Any sentence I pass is not of my making – it is of your making, reflecting your culpability, harm and offending. I have read much and been moved by all of it. In my view, the only appropriate sentence is immediate custody.”

Stuart Hughes, the Senior Trading Standards Officer who led the case, said:

“I'm pleased the verdict has adequately recognised the callous attitude Mr Waters exhibited by exploiting elderly, vulnerable and disabled customers. Having heard directly from his victims throughout the trial, I hope this verdict provides them with some satisfaction that justice has been done, and provides Mr Waters with an opportunity to reflect on the serious consequences of his offending.

“His victims paid money in good faith, often up front, for furniture intended to improve their quality of life. Anchor Mobility Limited and David Waters owed their customers a special duty of care, but instead caused vulnerable people great stress, anger and financial loss that they could ill afford.”

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection, said:

"This has been a case full of despicable actions and my thoughts continue to be with all those who have suffered, both emotionally and financially. Mr Waters will now have to live with the custodial consequences of misleading his customers and abusing his position of power.

"I am grateful to our Trading Standards officers, partner agencies and the National Trading Standards Tri Regional Investigation Team (East of England, London & South East) for helping bring Mr Waters to justice. We want a level playing field for Suffolk's honest traders and to help protect the legitimate economy of our county and beyond."

Waters had been involved in two previous companies, which supplied similar products, that were prosecuted by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards.

In 2013, he pleaded guilty to nine consumer protection offences as a result of his involvement in Mobility UK Limited. He was sentenced to a financial penalty and was ordered to pay the costs of the prosecution. In 2015, Westminster Recliners Limited pleaded guilty to engaging in an aggressive commercial practice, Waters had been their company secretary but had all offences against him dropped.

Anchor Mobility Limited was a business set up to supply bespoke armchairs and beds targeting elderly and disabled consumers.

In relation to Anchor Mobility Ltd, Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards received several calls and accumulated 26 witnesses, an indication of the scale of this operation. It is calculated that the loss to customers is around £82,000. However, it is likely that many other people have made payments to Anchor Mobility Limited and not received their goods.

Local businesses also lost out to Anchor Mobility Limited, who built up a debt of over £20,000 for lease or rental payments over a six-month period. Waters and his business were eventually locked out of their offices as a result. Furniture manufacturers also suffered by not being paid for products they had made, or lost time which was set aside for production.

If people are concerned about services, goods or products that they have agreed to or purchased on the doorstep, advice is on hand from the national Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 040506.

New bridleway opens up traffic free link

A newly created bridleway in Bury St Edmunds, linking the south east side of the town with Suffolk Business Park, was officially opened on 17 December.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, Andrew Reid joined Councillor Richard Rout, representing the Hardwick Division, and the Mayor of Bury St Edmunds, Councillor Peter Thompson, in cutting the ribbon. Children from Sebert Wood Primary School were also in attendance.

The new path will provide an off-road route for walkers and cyclists avoiding the busy A14 junction 44. Work started on reconstructing the bridleway on Monday 21 October 2019 and lasted for seven weeks.

The bridleway cost approximately £150k to construct and has been surfaced using recycled materials from roadworks. The bridleway will also link through to Sustrans National Cycle Route 13, and provide access into the Moreton Hall estate, Suffolk Business Park and the new Rougham Tower Avenue and Sybil

Andrews Academy. The route is a continuation of Rougham Road, providing a route beyond the lorry park running parallel to the A14.

Suffolk Highways worked closely with the landowner and with West Suffolk Council, which identified the route as a possible new sustainable connection in the town.

As part of the improvement works, Suffolk Highways will also be trialling solar powered lighting. Much like road studs, these units will provide a delineation of the route to assist users along the bridleway. The lighting provides low-level illumination to guide users; it is not designed to replace street lighting.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"I am delighted we have been able to provide this link and create an attractive route from the Moreton Hall to the South East side of Bury St Edmunds for cyclist and walkers.

"Following our climate emergency declaration, the council is looking into all aspects of how projects like this can help us be more sustainable, from encouraging walking and cycling, to using reclaimed materials and renewable energy. This bridleway makes active travel an appealing alternative and I hope local residents and commuters take full advantage of it."

Councillor Richard Rout, for Hardwick division, said:

"This multi-user path will connect the Moreton Hall area to the town. I know people who cycle and walk this route regularly and the only way currently is across the busy A134. The new bridleway is much safer and a direct route to the Suffolk Business Park and town centre.

"I also welcome the use of recycling material in the construction of the bridleway and the trialling of the solar power lights. It is important we consider new technology and sustainable materials in our highways works."

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service rated "Good" in Government inspection

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has been rated "Good" for its effectiveness, efficiency and how well it leads and manages its staff.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has undergone its most comprehensive, independent inspection in many years and has been rated as "Good" for its effectiveness, efficiency and how well it leads and manages its staff.

The findings come from [a report](#) published on 17 December by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), who inspected Suffolk's service earlier this year. Inspectors reviewed every aspect of the service, from how we respond to 999 emergencies, to looking at policies and interviewing a wide range of firefighters and staff.

The report praised many aspects of the service, particularly how well it collaborates with other emergency services and agencies, how it responds to fires and other emergencies, how it ensures fairness and promotes diversity, and the financially sound way the service is run.

Mark Hardingham, Chief Fire Officer, said:

“The ‘Good’ rating we have been given is pleasing and positive for our first inspection. This is down to the hard work and dedication of all our staff and I’m extremely proud to be their, and Suffolk’s, Chief Fire Officer.

“The inspection has reported a balance between what we do well and what we need to do better, much of which is already in hand and some of which will be new work.

“I’m especially pleased that the work we have all been doing on leadership, culture, values, equality and inclusion has been recognised.

“We will never stop working to ensure we provide a good and professional fire and rescue service to Suffolk’s communities whenever they need us.”

Councillor Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council, said:

“I’d like to thank all our fire and rescue staff for their professionalism and commitment, especially those involved in the inspection process who engaged in an open and honest way to help us improve even further.

“This report reflects the hard work of our professional firefighters, managers, 999 control and non-operational staff who work tirelessly to ensure they provide good services to people across Suffolk.

“I know from regularly speaking to firefighters and staff, that the service is in good hands, and Suffolk is a safe place to live and work. There is always room for improvement, and we will continue to work on these areas highlighted in the report.

“Our fire service is held in high regard across the county and country, and I understand the importance of continued investment. In recent years we have done this with new uniforms, fire engines, support vehicles and equipment.

“As part of this ongoing investment, we are proposing to increase the service’s budget by £500,000 plus inflation next year. This increase of close to £1m will help contribute to delivering on the improvements identified in the report, alongside our existing plans for investment.”

HMICFRS has now completed its first inspection of all 45 fire and rescue services across the country. These will continue to happen regularly, and it is proposed that Suffolk will be inspected again in 2021.

HMICFRS will also be publishing its ‘State of the Nation’ report summarising the findings from the inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England in the coming weeks.

New £3million pot announced for Suffolk projects

A £3million pot has been formed to fund projects such as new speed cameras, electric charging points or new cycle lanes.

On 16 December, Suffolk County Council's Finance Cabinet Member, Gordon Jones, unveiled the Suffolk 2020 fund - a one-year fund which organisations can bid for a share of.

Bids between £50,000 and £500,000 will be accepted within 100 days of the new financial year and will be for Suffolk-wide projects.

Councillor Jones said nothing is ruled out, so the fund could be used for schemes such as new cycle lanes, electric charging points, road safety schemes, automatic number plate recognition cameras, tree planting or other projects.

Councillor Jones said:

"I think it's quite exciting to take the opportunity to continue to engage with the communities and respond to some of our priorities.

"These are really significant and if there is an opportunity for match-funding the projects can be even better. It's not essential, but it can provide an opportunity to kick start some really exciting and sizeable projects."

The one-year financial settlement from central government, which effectively dictates how much the council will get, has enabled the creation of the fund because that money would normally be absorbed in other departments across a financial settlement of several years.

Councillor Jones confirmed that bids can only be for one-off project costs, rather than being used to prop up the running costs of any project or organisation.

The council currently has cross-party policy development panels investigating measures to help with climate issues and provision for cycling. Councillor Jones said the fund could well be used to help fund recommendations from those groups.

Schoolchildren's mission to create 1,000 endangered animals from waste

From turtles to snow leopards, Suffolk schoolchildren have created 1,000 endangered animals from recycled material.

Thirty schools and groups from across the county took part in the project, initiated by the Suffolk Waste Partnership, to make endangered animals from reused and recycled materials. The idea is to raise awareness of the effects of population growth and climate change, as well as the impact that littering and pollution has on animal habitats.

St Pancras Catholic Primary School in Ipswich was one of the schools which took part. Children used homemade glue made from flour and water, with recycled paper and cardboard to make tigers, whales, turtles and gorillas.

Justine Hughes, a class teacher at St Pancras, said:

"It was so lovely to have been given the green light to be creatively green, making recycled and totally biodegradable art work.

"The project linked seamlessly with our science topic about animals and the changing environments they inhabit."

A spokesperson for the Suffolk Waste Partnership said:

"This project is important because it helps young people realise that lots of everyday materials can be reused and recycled – that waste can be a helpful resource.

"It is inspiring to see such colourful creations and it is well worth a visit to see the art on display. We hope the children enjoyed the opportunity to learn about recycling."

This is the fifth year of the Christmas display with previous themes including 1,000 stars, baubles, birds of peace, polar bears and penguins.

The artwork will be on display at Ipswich Town Hall café Gallery from 27 November to 11th January and at The Apex, Bury St Edmunds, from 2 December to March 2020.