

LITTLE BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall on
Tuesday, 15th March 2022 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: W Binder (Chairman)
 S Wright
 B Palmer
 J Latham

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk
 J Fields – District Councillor

LB1/150322 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Keen.

LB2/150322 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

LB3/150322 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

LB4/150322 – PUBLIC FORUM

There were four members of the public present.

A member of the public asked if there was any update on Snoasis to which members confirmed there were no updates to report.

He also asked about the current situation with the Sterling Suffolk Glasshouse Business and whether it was being monitored.

Cllr Wright stated that it was expected that half the glasshouses in Northern Europe would be standing empty this summer due to the increase in gas prices. The Sterling Suffolk glasshouse would be maintained this year but would probably also stand empty.

LB5/150322 - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th JANUARY and 26TH JANUARY 2022

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday, 18th January and 26th January 2022 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

LB6/150322 - TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR CHRIS CHAMBERS

Cllr Chambers was not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

LB7/150322 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR JOHN FIELD

Cllr Fields report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

He briefly went through his report and commented on the following points:

- **Budget** - was agreed with Green and Lib Dem support. There were no major new initiatives but the £5.1 million additional spend from reserves on many small items, on the basis of which the District Council withdrew their budget amendments last year, were included. The Council Tax had been frozen so the district charge for a Band D property remained at £171.59.

An amendment to the budget was proposed to fund two new zero carbon electric buses to deliver scheduled rural community transport for Mid Suffolk residents. The cost estimated was £560,000 capital and £130,000 revenue for two years. The amendment was accepted so rapid delivery must be ensured.

- **County Deal** - Suffolk was one of nine counties invited to negotiate a devolution deal, bringing more control by local leaders over areas such as transport, infrastructure, and skills to the region. Such deals were proposed in the Levelling Up White Paper as part of a strategy for improving living standards, opportunity, and prosperity across the country. It could deliver London style public transport and a skills programme to help local people gain the high quality, high paying jobs of the future.
- **Digital Skills Programme for Businesses** - Business owners in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who wanted to learn new or improve their digital skills could access free courses as part of a new business support programme. The Digital Skills Programme was part of post-covid recovery strategy and was being run by MENTA using funding from Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund.
- **New Library in Needham Market** – Now open.
- **Additional Help for Rough Sleepers** - The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' have awarded Babergh and Mid Suffolk £324k to provide specialised emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness. It would provide four new self-contained "Mbloc" emergency accommodation units, two in Stowmarket and two in Sudbury.
- **Building Regs Improvements** - In June revised building regulations would require a 30% improvement in insulation and importantly, for all heating systems to be designed for a 55° C feed temperature to allow easy retrofit of a low carbon heat source. At the same time a good practice guide for installation of heat pump systems would be issued.
- **Judicial Review** - A judicial review instigated by Thurston Parish Council led to a judgement that the District Council Officer mis-directed the development control committee in the position the Thurston neighbourhood plan took on a development of 210 homes.
- **Greenhouses** – It had been reported that the tomato growing activity by Sterling Suffolk at the greenhouses on Bramford Road had ceased, a victim of the vastly increased gas prices triggered by post covid shortages and Russia's invasion of the Ukraine.

LB8/150322 – TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported that the old printer given to her during the handover with the previous Clerk was old and worked very slowly. She asked if members agreed to her disposing of it. It was felt that whilst the printer still worked it should be given to charity. **Clerk to action.**

The Clerk reported that she had received the preliminary invoice for the street lighting. She also reported that prior to the meeting an email had been circulated from the Environment and Transport Department which had stated one of the Parish Council's street lights (Unit 10) on Leather Bottle Hill was damaged. The department had removed the hanging lantern and made it safe. To replace the lantern would cost £876 plus VAT.

Members questioned the ownership of the light. The Clerk explained that the street light was included on the Parish Council's Asset Register which meant that the Parish Council did own the light. Members felt that they were not in a position to replace it at this time as the funds were not available. **Clerk to action.**

b) **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk reported on the Council's current financial position and movements since the last meeting. She reported that until she had access to the bank accounts she was uncertain of the current balance.

c) **TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS**

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Jan/Feb)	284.93
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exps (Jan-Feb)	102.89
Suffolk Cloud	Website Hosting	110.00
SALC	6 months Payroll Service	33.60
SALC	Internal Audit for 2020/21	189.60

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £721.02 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) **TO APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR 2021/22**

It was AGREED: That Trevor Brown CPFA (Local Council Financial Services & Internal Audit) be appointed as auditor for the purposes of the 2021/22 audit.

e) **EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2021/22**

The Clerk reported that due to the late Internal and External Audits for 2020/21 an External Audit would be required for 2021/22

It was NOTED: That an External Audit would be required for 2021/22.

LB9/150322 – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

a) **REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

It was AGREED: That the Internal Audit Control and Risk Management Arrangements be reviewed and approved.

b) **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS**

It was AGREED: That the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders be approved and adopted.

c) **DATA PROTECTION POLICY**

It was AGREED: That the Data Protection Policy be adopted.

d) **PUBLICATION SCHEME**

It was AGREED: That the Publication Scheme be adopted.

e) **DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY**

It was AGREED: That the Document Retention Policy be adopted

LB10a/150322 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: SCC/0024/21MS/VOC - Variation of Conditions 1 (Approved Details), 2 (Period of Permission), 16 (Provision of Newt Ponds), 23 (Aftercare Management) and 24 (Aftercare Scheme) of permission MS/1158/11 - Masons Landfill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council had no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

Ref: DC/22/00661 - Submission of Details (Reserved matters) Application for Outline Planning Permission DC/20/01175. Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale in relation to the construction of Phase 5 / Units 7, 8, 9 & 10 - Port One Logistics Park, Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road , Great Blakenham

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council had no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

Ref: DC/20/05895 - Full Planning Application - Installation of renewable energy generating station, comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including Nature Areas - Land To The South Of Church Farm, Somersham, IP8 4PN And Land To The East Of The Channel, Burstall, IP8 4JL In Suffolk

It was AGREED: That whilst the Parish Council did not object to solar farms, the location was not deemed appropriate as it was good quality growing land and therefore the Parish Council Objected to the application. **Clerk to action.**

Ref: DC/21/00060 - Full Planning Application - Installation of renewable led energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including Nature Areas - Land To The East Of The Channel, Burstall Hill

It was AGREED: That whilst the Parish Council did not object to solar farms, the location was not deemed appropriate as it was good quality growing land and therefore the Parish Council Objected to the application. **Clerk to action.**

Ref: DC/22/01075 - Householder Application - Erection of a two storey extension and alterations (following removal of greenhouse and courtyard wall) - The Elms, Somersham Road, Little Blakenham

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council had no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

LB10b/150322 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received.

LB11/150322 – SOLAR ENERGY FARM ON LAND SOUTH OF TYE LANE, NEAR BRAMFORD

This item had been dealt with above.

LB12/150322 – TELEPHONE BOX

It was confirmed that there was a stump in the corner of the telephone box where an electricity cable could be passed through and that it just needed to be re-connected. Cllr Binder stated that he would ask an Electrician to inspect it.

LB13/150322 – SPEEDING

Concerns had been raised that many motorists were speeding through the village. The Clerk stated that she could look into the village sharing a speed sign with other villages and would also ask the Speed Management team if they could monitor the speed on occasions.

A member of the public asked about the Quiet Lanes Initiative and asked whether Valley Road could be considered.

It was AGREED: That the Clerk would liaise with the Police on the speed monitoring matters.
That the Clerk liaise with the Lead on the Quiet Lanes Process and report back to the next meeting.

LB14/150322 – VILLAGE HALL REFURBISHMENT UPDATE

Cllr Binder reported that the Architect had drawn up plans and an application for £40,000 to the Suez Community Trust had been submitted, with a full application being needed to be applied for at a later stage.

He explained that the application for funding would include a disabled access.

Cllr Fields stated that Locality Budget funding could be applied for where the insulation was concerned.

LB15/150322 – VILLAGE SIGN UPDATE

It was AGREED: That the Village Sign purchase should be put on hold until the Parish Council’s funds had increased to pay for the project.

LB16/150322 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Dog Bin added to the list
- Lack of County Cllr reports and present at meetings

LB17/150322 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting be held at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 17th May 2022 at 7pm.

The meeting finished at 8.45pm

Chairman: Dated: