

**MINUTES OF KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 14 JULY 2014 IN KERSEY VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM**

PRESENT

John Hume – Chair, John Maltby, Veronica Partridge, Yvonne Martin, Ian Fidell, 7 members of the public and the Clerk – Sarah Partridge. PCSO Amanda Coleman, Jenny Antill and Robert Lindsay attended for part of the meeting.

86/14 APOLOGIES were received and accepted from Giles Hollingworth.

87/14 CO-OPTION TO FILL THE VACANCIES FOR TWO PARISH COUNCILLORS

The Chairman was delighted to report that Ian Fidell had expressed an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor, Councillors co-opted Ian Fidell onto the Parish Council; his term of office will end in May 2015 when Parish Council elections will be held across the District. Ian signed a declaration of acceptance of office form. There is now just one vacancy left on the Parish Council.

88/14 ACCEPT MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

89/14 CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS – None received

90/14 REPORTS -*The meeting was adjourned to receive reports.*

a) Police – No reported crimes since our last meeting on the 12th May. PCSO Coleman reported that locally there is an increase in shed and outbuilding break- ins again, power tools, ride on mowers being the targets, leaflets giving advice on security were made available. There were no updates regarding the burglaries at Kersey Mill. *PCSO Coleman then gave her apologies and left the meeting.*

b) Suffolk County Councillor – Jenny Antill gave her report, which is appended to these minutes. Jenny then answered questions, including a query on when broadband provision would be improved for the parish, both the Hadleigh and Boxford exchange properties. It was commented that the slow broadband speeds were making it difficult for small businesses to operate successfully as well as students trying to complete homework, most of which entails use of the internet. In general properties will only be informed within 3 months of a potential upgrade to broadband connections but all properties should have at least 2Mbs by the end of 2015.

c) Babergh District Councillor – John Hume congratulated Robert Lindsay on his recent election and welcomed him to his first Parish Council meeting in Kersey. Robert gave his report which is appended to these minutes. Robert then answered questions including one about the poor state of road edges up Cherry Hill which residents feel need more than just sweeping as the dirt is making the road narrower than it actually is. There was also comment about the cutting of roadside verges; this is a matter for SCC which Jenny Antill said she would investigate.

The meeting was reconvened.

Jenny Antill gave her apologies and left the meeting.

91/14 TO ADOPT A NEW UPDATED CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillors all had a copy of the new Suffolk Local Code of Conduct, appended, which SALC recommend all Parish Councils adopt. There have been no changes in the legislation but new Government guidance has been published, slight changes to the Suffolk Local Code of Conduct and new guidance should help to improve efficiency and reduce bureaucracy for local councils. The new amended Code of Conduct removes unnecessary restrictions around the granting of dispensations. Requests for dispensations must be made in writing before a meeting and a decision about the dispensation must be in writing but no longer needs to be minuted in advance of the meeting at which it is required. Following new Government guidance the thinking on councillor interests and precept

setting has changed, previously it was thought necessary for Councillors to request a dispensation to discuss or vote on precept setting. The new Government guidance makes it quite clear that being a Council Tax payer is not considered a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) so consequently there will be no need for a dispensation when discussing or voting on setting the precept in the future. An often overlooked restriction which Councillors need to be aware of is if they have council tax arrears. A Councillor with two months or more council tax arrears must disclose this at the start of any meeting discussing the precept or budget. Councillors resolved to adopt this new code.

92/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2014 were signed and dated as being correct.

93/14 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk contacted highways regarding the mowing near the Splash and under the village sign, they confirmed that these areas are now on the schedule and the urban mowing team should be visiting regularly to keep the areas tidy. The Clerk also contacted highways about the mowing of roadside verges, the contractors have been working their way round the county, having focused on A and B class roads first C and U class roads were due to be finished by the end of June. From the beginning of July contractors will give a second cut to A and B class roads.

94/14 CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence for the Parish Council has been circulated to Councillors.

Babergh carried out a public consultation about the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule; this was circulated to Councillors who agreed they did not wish to respond.

Rural Housing Policy and Core Strategy Policy CS11 Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Public Consultation. Councillors agreed they were happy to see the introduction of this policy, there was concern that priority was given to developers rather than local people, there was no mention of brownfield sites or empty housing in the policy. John Hume offered to review the updated policy and respond on behalf of the Parish Council along these lines.

95/14 FINANCE

A copy of the accounts to date and a financial statement, showing bank balances and expenditure for approval were tabled by the Clerk; these are appended to the minutes. Payments were all approved. Councillors then reviewed actual spending against the budget, sheet appended to the minutes. Giles Hollingworth had agreed to become the Council's Financial Controller, and as such he will take a particular interest in the Parish Council finances.

The Parish Council needed to review and adopt new financial regulations. The Clerk and Councillors had been through the model financial regulations, they have been amended so they are appropriate for Kersey, copy appended. It was resolved to adopt these new financial regulations, they will be reviewed annually.

Natalie Blyth our Internal Auditor checked the Parish Council files and accounts recently and found everything to be in order, her report was circulated to Councillors. She completed the internal audit section of the external audit papers and these were posted to the external auditors.

The Clerk had contacted the Ipswich Building Society regarding the poor interest rate on the account; unfortunately this is the best interest rate they can offer and they have no other suitable accounts available to the Parish Council.

96/14 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

B/14/00418/FHA/JD The Old Vicarage, Church Hill – Construction of hard tennis court with associated fencing and additional perimeter wooden fence. Babergh has granted permission for this application.

B/14/00657/AGD West Sampsons Hall, Hall Road, notification under Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 – Erection of agricultural storage building. This application was received between meetings and needed an urgent response, all

Councillors were notified of the application, all were happy with the proposal and did not wish to respond.

B/14/00599/LBC Quill House, The Street – Insertion of new bathroom window, chimney pot and ‘Chinese Hat’. Insertion of oak staircase (following removal of existing metal spiral staircase), removal of render and application of replacement line render and limewash, change of colour and limewash internal timbers. Councillors considered this application and agreed to fully support. The Clerk reported that Babergh are going to change over to e-planning consultations, full report appended. This change will mean that no hard copies of planning applications will be sent to the Parish Council, everything will be published online and responses will be made electronically. This will have several benefits for Babergh, including considerable financial savings but unfortunately this will increase costs for Parish Councils as more time will be needed to download and save planning applications prior to meetings, with poor broadband speeds this will probably be a slow process. Also a laptop and projector will need to be sourced/purchased. In response to feedback from parishes, in particular relating to additional costs which parishes have not planned for, Babergh has delayed the introduction of e-planning consultations until the autumn. Councillors understood the need to move forward with technology but strongly felt that Parish Councils needed financial support for the introduction of e-planning consultation. A letter will be written to Babergh requesting financial support.

97/14 KCPC WORKING GROUP

The repairs to the slide, replacement of the swing frame, removal of the old broken spring chicken and other maintenance works were completed in May. A cheque has been received from the insurance company to cover the repair works for the slide. A quarterly inspection of the playground was carried out in June and in general all was found to be in order, there are a few minor items needing attention which will be dealt with by the working group over the coming weeks. Repairs have been carried out to the cricket netting by fitting a new section of netting to the lower part of the net which is fixed to timber at ground level. It is planned to clean the batting mat this week. The mowing rota is working well again this year. RoSPA will be visiting the playground at some point in September to carry out their annual inspection.

98/14 FOOTPATH WORKING GROUP

John Maltby reported no problems with the footpath network in Kersey. All paths had been mown, except for path 18 which has been cleared of obstructions and will be mown shortly. The landowner has committed to clearing this path to a 6’6” width in the autumn. An invoice will be sent to SCC for the first cut of category 1 paths in the Parish carried out by the Parish Council. A second cut of paths will be carried out over the next couple of months when necessary. The next meeting of the Footpath Working Group will be on 29 September at 7.30pm in The Bell. A query was raised about overhanging branches on a footpath near The Priory; John Maltby confirmed these had recently been cleared.

99/14 PROGRESS ON WRITING A COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN

John Hume reported that the Community Emergency Plan now needed to be in a new format, including a map. It is hoped to complete this shortly before being circulated to all Councillors.

100/14 PROGRESS WITH THE REVIEW OF THE PARISH PLAN AND PARISH ACTION PLAN

Unfortunately a meeting has not yet been arranged for the review group to discuss the results of the public consultation events, time permitting a meeting will be arranged during the summer.

101/14 TO DISCUSS PROGRESS WITH THE PROJECT TO IMPROVE THE FOOTPATH LINKS BETWEEN THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE AND VALE LANE INCLUDING THE PROPOSED JUBILEE STEPS

There has been little progress with this proposed path. The Clerk is waiting to hear back from the highways officer for further advice about putting together a proposal document so comparable quotes

can be obtained from contractors. A contractor has visited the site and is putting together an initial quote. There is some uncertainty about the exact depth and line of some existing utilities which run down the hill near or under the footpath, the highways officer has offered to look into this for the Parish Council. Thanks to Kim and Rosanna who recently held a very successful swing dance in the village hall, through their generosity they have contributed the proceeds of £560 to the Jubilee Steps fund. The balance in the Jubilee Steps account is now £771.56.

The meeting was adjourned to hear comments from members of the public.

A member of the public raised concern about the surface of the proposed path, it was felt that it would be a scar on the landscape and the steps would not fit in with the natural landscape.

The meeting was reconvened.

Councillors confirmed that the proposed Jubilee Steps will be topped with tar and chippings in the same way as the car park and paths in Church Walk, near the school so as to be in keeping with the area. Councillors had given particular consideration to the right path surface; the aim is to provide a safe, easily maintained, long lasting, attractive and cost-effective way of improving pedestrian access from the Vale Lane end of the village, past the school down Church Hill and into the village. The Chairman thanked the member of the public for his comments and said the Parish Council had consulted widely during the planning stages when all residents had the opportunity to make comments and these new comments would be taken into account when finalising plans for the project.

102/14 TO ADOPT A NEW DISPENSATION POLICY

Following the adoption of the new Suffolk Local Code of Conduct it was necessary for the Parish Council to adopt a new dispensation policy. All Councillors had a copy of this new policy and resolved to adopt it, copy appended.

103/14 REVIEW PARISH COUNCIL ASSETS, INCLUDING REPORT ON PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF ASSETS AND INSURANCE COVER, INCLUDING A REVIEW OF FIDELITY GUARANTEE

Physical inspection

The wooden top seat on white brick base at Vale Lane triangle has one slightly loose timber which needs to be re-fixed. The wooden bench next to the pump has one loose seat slat and the bench in the playground at the Glebe has a missing back slat. Some of the Oak bollards on Church Hill are showing signs of age and there is one loose granite sett. The metal bucket in the litter bin on the corner of Bildeston Road is virtually rusted away and needs to be replaced.

The street lights were not checked as these are all maintained under our street lighting contract with SCC. All other assets are in reasonable condition, and do not require any attention.

It was agreed that insurance values were appropriate and insurance cover was appropriate. Since the Parish Council will be coming to the end of the Long Term Understanding with Suffolk ACRE in October the Clerk will get quotes from other insurance companies to find the best deal for the Parish Council, insurance cover will be discussed again at the Parish Council meeting in September.

The fidelity guarantee is currently £25,000; current bank balances are below this figure and are not expected to exceed this figure for the remainder of the year.

Robert Lindsay gave his apologies and left the meeting.

104/14 TRAINING

Information about training courses is regularly circulated to all Councillors.

105/14 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS

John Maltby attended the SALC/Babergh area meeting on 2 June, he reported that Tom Barker, Babergh Corporate Manager – New Communities had given a talk. Topics included new uses of land, creation of car parks, expansion of school playgrounds, affordable housing and accommodation of wind turbines, including profit to community.

John Hume and Sarah Partridge had attended the Babergh Parish Liaison meeting on 3 June, their report was read, copy appended.

106/14 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

8 Sept SALC/Babergh Area meeting, John Maltby to attend.

107/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Next year will be the 80th anniversary of the building of the village hall, it is planned to hold events to celebrate this milestone. Ideas and support for events are welcomed by the Village Hall Committee. So far ideas are to hold a drinks party, children's party and swing dance.

Sadly there have been several complaints recently about dog fouling on the footpath behind The Bell and near the allotments. John Maltby had a notice which he will put up reminding dog owners of their responsibility, the Parish Council has provided a dog poo bin on Kedges Lane right at the bottom of this footpath. Another note will be put in the newsletter asking owners to be more responsible, it is very unpleasant and inconsiderate to others.

The meeting was adjourned for 'Parish Time'

A query was raised about the proposed e-planning consultation and how this would affect members of the public wishing to view plans at Babergh. It is understood that Babergh will have a computer available for public viewing of electronic plans.

It was commented that mowing at the playground had not been very good lately, the grass is a bit long and there were some thistles. KCPC will be informed and will attend to this. It was commented that a resident in Vale Lane may like to volunteer to help with mowing around the Parish. The Chairman will follow up this offer.

There are still some potholes in Vale Lane, near the triangle outside number 1 and 2 and at the top of Water Lane.

The street light on Cherry Hill is obscured by over grown trees; the landowner will be made aware of this problem.

The meeting was reconvened.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Appended to these minutes are 25 sheets:

- SCC report from Jenny Antill
- Babergh report from Robert Lindsay
- Suffolk Local Code of Conduct (5 sheets)
- Kersey Parish Council Receipts and Payments to date (2 sheets)
- Kersey Parish Council Finance sheet for 14 July 2014
- Kersey Parish Council Budget to 31 March 2015
- Kersey Parish Council Financial Regulations (10 sheets)
- Report about e-planning consultations
- Kersey Parish Council Dispensation Policy
- Notes from Babergh Parish Liaison meeting 3 June 2014 (2 sheets)