

**MINUTES OF KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 27 APRIL 2020
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING AT 7 PM**

PRESENT

John Hume – Chair, Penny Calnan, Dave Finch, Pascoe Gibbons, Philippa Harris, Kevin Pratt, Andrew Rogers, 5 members of the public and the Clerk – Sarah Partridge

The Chair welcomed everyone to this first remote Parish Council meeting being held in these unusual circumstances because of movement restrictions due to COVID-19.

The Chair explained that the meeting will be recorded by the Parish Council. The meeting is reliant on an internet connection and power and should either of these fail the first option will be to try and reconnect the meeting using the existing link. If this is not possible then the meeting will be adjourned from the point the meeting was stopped by a loss of power or internet connection and will be re-convened at the earliest opportunity. The meeting will continue even if some members are unable to connect so long as the Council remains quorate. The meeting will be run following the normal protocols but may be a little more formal than normal to ensure everyone can hear what is said during the meeting. There will be an opportunity for members of the public to speak during Parish Time, the public participation session. As usual members of the public will also be invited to speak about an individual planning application when that matter is being considered by the Council. The Chair will ask members of the public to raise their hand if they wish to speak.

The Chair spoke about the sad loss of two former members of the Parish Council who have died recently. John Maltby, a former Chair of the Parish Council and his wife Anne who also recently passed away, both made a big contribution to the community and Jack Stiff a former Parish Councillor who had lived in Kersey his whole life. Jack was a very regular attendee at Parish Council meetings, even in recent years when his health was not so good, he still made a big effort to attend meetings. He will be fondly remembered for his knowledge of local matters, good manners and courtesy and will be missed in the village.

50/20 APOLOGIES – None.

51/20 ACCEPT MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

John Hume and Philippa Harris both declared a conflict of interest in planning application DC/20/01266 Land South West Of, Vale Lane which is a resubmission of DC/19/01834 because they had been signatories to a formal letter of objection to the earlier application DC/19/01834.

52/20 CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS – None received.

53/20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2020 were approved as a correct record. The paper copy of the minutes will be signed at a later date once movement restrictions have been lifted.

54/20 PARISH TIME - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARISHIONERS TO BRING MATTERS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL – None.

55/20 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE PARISH COUNCIL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Chair thanked all those who had been supporting others in the community during this difficult time. A volunteer group to support residents was put together by the Chair and Clerk very quickly at the start of this health emergency and a risk assessment carried out of the work volunteers were being

asked to do. A copy of the risk assessment was given to every volunteer. A paper leaflet was delivered to every house in Kersey on 18 March 2020 with contact details for volunteers in each area of the parish offering help with shopping, collecting prescriptions, posting mail and delivering urgent supplies. Also contact details for volunteers who are happy to chat on the telephone to help reduce feelings of isolation. It is believed that every house in Kersey has a telephone, therefore this offer of support is accessible to everyone in Kersey. A note was put in the newsletter and on the Kersey website with contact details for the Clerk for anyone needing a new leaflet.

The Clerk has been in regular contact with Babergh and Community Action Suffolk who are aware of the volunteer group the Parish Council has set up to help residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Babergh has offered their support to the Parish Council for the volunteers should any help be required. They have supplied personalised letters confirming the volunteers are authorised to carry out shopping etc which should help if volunteers need to buy extra things where a shop has restrictions on the number of items an individual can purchase or if challenged by the police for being out and about.

Our District Councillor has provided details of a foodbank in Bildeston who are available to support anyone in need in Kersey. This information has been circulated to all COVID-19 volunteers, Parish Councillors and the newsletter.

The Parish Council support leaflet with contact details for volunteers has been very well received and has given reassurance to residents. It seems that there is plenty of informal help and support being offered in Kersey and some direct support has been requested from volunteers which has been very much appreciated. The Parish Council has received several verbal thanks for the support being offered and a lovely letter of thanks. These have been passed on to the volunteers.

On 4 April 2020, the government brought The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 into force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely. This new regulation will remain in force until May 2021. The Parish Council has agreed to hold remote Parish Council meetings using the Zoom video conferencing application. Until further notice all Parish Council meetings will continue as planned using Zoom. Links for members of the public to participate in these remote meetings will be published on the Kersey website. The Parish Council agreed to pay a subscription for this service on a monthly basis at a cost of £11.99 plus VAT/month. This decision was retrospectively approved by the Parish Council at this meeting.

Parish Meetings are not covered by this new legislation, therefore, there will not be an Annual Parish Assembly. All the various community organisations who normally give a report to the Annual Parish Assembly have been asked to submit a report to the Clerk. Once they have all been received these will be published on the Kersey website and passed to the newsletter team for publication.

The Parish Council makes all payments by cheque. At the present time due to the government restrictions on travel and social distancing this is not possible. Only two invoices are due for payment and no additional payments are anticipated until June. The Clerk has been in contact with both suppliers who understand the situation and are happy to wait for payment.

A couple of Councillors raised a concern that some residents were not observing the social distancing rules. Everyone was reminded of the importance of following these rules to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

56/20 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a) Progress:

DC/20/00875 Land at Cherry Hill, Kersey, Suffolk

Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell group of poplar trees
Babergh has granted permission. Decision notice dated 20 March 2020.

DC/20/00300 Barn Adjacent to Red House Farm, Wickerstreet Green, Kersey, Suffolk

Proposal: Full Planning Application - Conversion and alterations to agricultural building to form 1 no. dwelling.

The planning department at Babergh has confirmed that this application has not been decided. It has been made invalid on BDC system for some reason and so is not visible on public website.

b) To consider planning applications received:

DC/20/00737 Kersey Mill, Hadleigh Road, Kersey, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 6DP

Proposal: Full Planning Application - Conversion of office store/stabling to provide guest accommodation.

DC/20/00738 Kersey Mill, Hadleigh Road, Kersey, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 6DP

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent - Conversion of office store/stabling to provide guest accommodation.

The applicant had sent an email to the Parish Council which had been circulated to all Councillors. There were no comments from members of the public present. Councillors considered the above two applications together. Following discussion and a vote the Parish Council unanimously agreed to fully support this application. The Parish Council supports these applications because they will support local businesses and there is no harm to the heritage assets at Kersey Mill. The Parish Council would support conditions being attached to these planning applications to ensure the conversions are carried out in such a way to protect the historic fabric of the buildings and to ensure the conversions are in keeping with the historic buildings on the site.

DC/20/01266 Land South West Of, Vale Lane, Kersey, Suffolk

Proposal: Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved)-Erection of up to 8no. dwellings with parking and access from a new shared driveway with a single access to Hall Road (resubmission of DC/19/01834)

John Hume and Philippa Harris both declared their conflict of interest and left the meeting.

Andrew Rogers, as Vice Chair of the Parish Council, took the Chair for this item.

The Parish Council had received three copies of letters of objection, sent to Babergh, these had, as usual, been circulated to all Parish Councillors. Three members of the public spoke in opposition to this proposed development. Their concerns were that there was nothing new in this proposal, which has already been rejected by the Parish Council and Babergh in the earlier application. It was felt the timing of this resubmission during the current lockdown was insensitive. The location is wrong and it will not maintain the character of the village. The houses are not needed in Kersey and the housing needs assessment was not relevant to Kersey. There are several houses in the parish which remain unoccupied. It was felt the Parish Council should work with Babergh to try and get these empty houses back into use. Many residents in Kersey and particularly in Vale Lane oppose this development.

Councillors then discussed the application. Councillors had concerns about highway safety, loss of agricultural land, harm caused to the landscape and the setting of the Conservation Area. Also, the lack of employment opportunities for new residents and that there is no regular public transport in Kersey. It was noted that there are several empty properties in Kersey showing there is no need for more housing in the parish. Councillors were aware of the strong local opposition to this application. The Parish Council voted unanimously to object to this application. It was agreed the Clerk would write to Babergh to confirm this decision to object and to refer Babergh to the earlier responses made by the Parish Council in May, June and September 2019 to the first application DC/19/01834.

John Hume and Philippa Harris re-joined the meeting.

57/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO BRING MATTERS TO THE COUNCIL'S ATTENTION

A Councillor raised a concern that there is often water running on the road on Cox Hill as you enter Boxford. Another Councillor had happened to see a highways official and had already raised this concern directly with highways. It was suggested that perhaps it could be a water leak and it should be reported to Anglian Water, which the Councillor agreed to do. The Clerk does not have any better

access to highways officers to report problems than members of the public. Councillors were reminded to use the SCC highways reporting tool on the SCC website.

A concern was raised again about speeding in the Parish and asked when the police were going to be monitoring traffic speeds. The Clerk had received a report from the police to say they had carried out monitoring in Wickerstreet Green, which suggested that there was not a major issue. Prosecutable percentages were too low to trigger the Safety Camera team but the police would try to visit Kersey on their rounds. Councillors asked the Clerk to check with the police when and exactly where this monitoring was carried out as they had not seen any monitoring equipment.

The Chair asked whether the Parish Council would support investigations by himself and the Clerk to find out why building work had not commenced at River House following the granting of planning permission. There was a concern that this important historic listed building in the centre of the village and the associated barns behind the house, were being left to deteriorate. After some discussion it was agreed there was no support for the Parish Council to take any action.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for investigating the options and arranging this first remote meeting of the Parish Council. He asked those present to feedback to the Clerk any comments which may improve future remote meetings. He also thanked all those helping during this current crisis. The next Parish Council meeting will be, as scheduled, on Monday 11 May 2020 and will be held remotely via video conferencing.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.27 pm.

There are no items appended to these minutes.