

ORFORD & GEDGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
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Minutes of the 205th meeting of Orford & Gedgrave Parish Council
held on Wednesday 8th February 2017 at 7.00pm in the New Room of the Town Hall

Present: Cllr Anne Macro (Chairman)	Cllr Derick Brenchley
Cllr Richard Mallett	Cllr Michael Finney
Cllr Peter Smith	Cllr Margaret Green
Cllr Matthew Smy	Cllr Michelle Golder

In Attendance, Marie Backhouse (Clerk).

Opening remarks

Public Forum

There were no members of the public.

MINUTES

1. Reports from Representatives

1. County Councillor Andrew Reid.

Apologies sent and a report was submitted to the Councillors.

2. District Councillor Ray Herring

Absent and no report sent.

2. Apologies for absence:

Cllr J Robinson & Cllr J Howard

3. Declarations of interest:

Cllr M Finney – Correspondence –Royal British Legion thank you was written by him.

4. Applications for dispensation:

None

5. It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the 204th Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th January 2017 and the In camera minutes of the 9th November 2016 be accepted as a true record.

6. Matters arising from the 204th Parish Council Meeting held on 11th January 2017 and the In camera minutes held on the 9th November 2016.

Cllr M Finney asked if there had been any further incidences of speeding cars on the car park.

Cllr M Golder said that she had been informed that this had not been resolved.

The toilets in Bakers Lane are undergoing refurbishment, and this may take up to two weeks.

7. Finance

7.1 The Council received, noted and approved the cheques and balances from 1st December – 31st December 2016.

7.2 The Council received, noted and approved the cheques and balances from 1st January – 31st January 2017.

7.3 The Council received, noted and approved the quarterly accounts from October – December 2016.

8. Planning

DC/17/0321/FUL – 4 Mundays Lane, Orford

This was a request for an extension and dormer at the front.

Cllr M Finney said that the plan was to replace the Velux windows with dormer windows.

The Council had no objection to this proposal.

9. Parish Council Business:-

(1) Affordable Housing

Please see appendix 1, notes from Cllr P Smith.

(2) Policies – Gritting & Village Green

Cllr A Macro informed the Councillors that the Gritting Policy had remained the same.

Cllr R Mallett proposed that we continue to adopt the Gritting Policy; this was seconded by Cllr M Green and approved by all.

Cllr A Macro reported that we also needed to re-adopt the Village Green Policy.

Cllr R Mallett proposed that we continue to adopt the Village Green Policy; this was seconded by Cllr D Brenchley and agreed by all.

Cllr A Macro circulated photos of the village green down Quay Street, as it is very muddy.

It was agreed to write to the resident and ask them to make a note of anyone blocking their access route to their property. Also the driving of a vehicle up and over the bank is not acceptable.

(3) Flower Show

Cllr A Macro commented that she had sent several emails to the Flower Show Chairman but had no response.

Cllr M Smy said that he had been informed that the meeting was on Friday 31st March 2017, but he was unsure of the time.

Some of the Councillors commented that they wished to attend the meeting.

(4) Insurance

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Parish Council insurance company and the Councillors and volunteers are covered; therefore the Emergency Group are covered under the Parish Council insurance.

(5) Staff Appraisals

Please see appendix 2, notes from Cllr P Smith.

(6) Goals for the recreation ground

Cllr A Macro informed the Councillors that the goals had now been ordered and they would be delivered in about 2 weeks; and this is thanks to funding from Andrew Reid £590, Ray Herring £1250 and Cobra Mist £40.

10. Correspondence

- **Royal British Legion**

Cllr A Macro read out a thank you letter from the Royal British Legion concerning the donation towards the poppy wreath.

Cllr M Smy informed the Council that he had placed the orange fencing in front of the recreation ground hut alongside the grass to prevent anyone parking on the grass.

Cllr M Golder suggested that we may need to consider something more permanent, such as a fence that would match that around the play area.

Cllr M Smy said that the only problem seems to be when there is an elderly person that require access to the hut and would therefore need to park closer to the door.

Cllr R Mallett said that there was only ever access for deliveries to the hut, and no parking.

Cllr M Finney suggested that we could have a dropping off point or removable posts.

Cllr P Smith suggested that we should have a working party group for both the affordable housing and the staff appraisals.

The Affordable Housing working group consists of Cllr M Finney, Cllr M Golder, Cllr P Smith and Cllr J Howard.

The Staff Appraisals working group consists of Cllr A Macro, Cllr I Thornton, Cllr D Brenchley and Cllr J Robinson.

11. Items for next meeting:

Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

12. Date of next meeting: 08/03/17 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed _____ (Chairman) Date _____

Appendix 1

9.1 Affordable Housing

Cllr. P Smith opened the discussion by briefly summarizing the current position as regards 1) A possible “Joint Venture Partnership” with the Hastoe Housing Group and 2) The Local Site Allocation and Area Specific Policy Plan of Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) which has recently had its Central Government Review by Dr E Hills of the Planning Inspectorate (16/01/2017).

Hastoe

Cllr Smith expressed concern that the Hastoe Housing Group appeared to be associated with free market sales and particularly increasingly selling high value social properties leading to a surplus or profit. Because of this initial concern the Strategic, Financial, and Board reports (including the Risk report) of Hastoe Group for the last financial year had been interrogated.

In addition Moody’s (Public Sector Europe) report of the 5TH October 2016 for the Hastoe Group was reviewed. Hastoe Group appeared to be structurally sound but was rated by Moody’s as A2 negative i.e. the company has a negative outlook.

This appears to be related to the company’s high debt level which the company is predicted to find increasingly hard to service due to government policy changes making the operating environment for groups such as Hastoe increasingly challenging i.e. progressively decreased rents and loss off subsidy.

SCDC Local Site Allocation and Area Specific Policy Development Plan:

The complete plan, following submission by SCDC to Central Government has been examined by Dr E Hills of the National Planning Inspectorate and apparently accepted but with many Major Modifications (MM).

Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council have been reviewed (as have all the other Parishes in East Suffolk) for Housing Need and the 10-year Housing Plan to 2027 identified. The need for 10 houses has been thought appropriate for Orford and Gedgrave with a small number of Affordable Houses within this number. This is within the context of the true number of local residents predicted as probably decreasing within the 10 years (but the number of cars increasing).

A site has been identified and approved by SCDC as appropriate in Orford for the 10 houses to the north of Mill Close (0.82 hectares or 2 acres). It is of note that since first identified this area of land, which was originally a possible Rural Exception Site, has been enclosed within the Parish Boundary probably for central planning reasons. A detailed planning review of this site has been made at SCDC with specific recommendations for the Developer.

Main Modifications (MM) of the original SCDC Planning Document for this site, made by Central Government is:

- A note that Gedgrave Sewage Treatment Works is operating close to its environmental capacity and that any possible developer in the parish ahead of a Planning Application would have to submit a detailed proposal and seek proper approval of a plan to upgrade this capacity appropriately.
- A statement that Affordable Housing would require “a financial contribution which should be sought “(presumably from the Developer?)

Following these two summaries Councillors discussed the issues that had been introduced. It was stated that local Parishioners had independently suggested that in the interests of “due diligence” other, ideally local, Housing Associations should be contacted and asked for information and advice.

It had also been suggested separately that early expert legal advice should be sought before any Joint Venture Partnership was entered into on behalf of the Community particularly as the political environment as regards Housing is changing so rapidly at the moment

Conclusions of the discussion were:

- To ensure truly affordable local housing was available, in perpetuity, for our Community it was likely the Community would need to own the land on which the development occurred.
- We should explore whether a grant could be obtained for our Affordable Housing from the Community Housing Fund at the SCDC. This may be time limited offer.
- That we should contact the local Orwell Housing Association for further advice. They have previously carried out work and been associated with a planning application for land north of Mill Close. This may mean that work would not be duplicated that they have already done
- A core-working group should explore these issues further for the Parish Council. (Mr. Mike Finney, Ms Michelle Golder, Mr. Jonnie Howard, Mrs Anne Macro (PC Chair) and Mr. Peter Smith)

Appendix 2

9.5 Staff Appraisals

Cllr. P Smith presented a review of the staff appraisal process. The appraisal process of the Council and Trust staff has been discussed with Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) who have made recommendations and supplied a series of documents informing as to a suitable appraisal process for Parish Council Staff.

In summary:

- There appears to be no legal requirement for an appraisal process to be carried out.
- An accurate written record of an Employee's appraisal has to be made and kept securely with the Employees personnel file, current job description and list of current written objectives.
- Appraisals should be regularly carried out for each employee usually at yearly intervals but more regularly if an issue is identified.
- The appraisal should be carried out for the Clerks to the Council and Trust, the Treasurer and the Quay Warden by that employee's manager (usually the Chair of the Council and Trust) and one other nominated person. Should there be an issue then an outside experienced assessor maybe consulted.
- Our other 3 employee's line manager would usually be the Clerk to the Council/Trust.
- Written evidence with a log of incidents are mandatory for any complaint. It is unusual for any action as regards any complaint to be made on the basis of one appraisal.
- The documents appertaining to an employee's appraisal should be archived accessibly, securely and indefinitely particularly to provide for any legal proceedings that may occur in the future as regards that employee.(Data Protection Act 1998)
- The appraisal's written account should be written in a detached way and in a dispassionate manner with no suggestion of the account being punitive, retaliatory, or biased as regards race, religion, gender, disability, marital status or sexual preference.
- Appraisal is a two way process with the employee encouraged to comment on any work conditions or issues which he/she believes detracts from their ability to carry out their duties properly.