

ORFORD & GEDGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
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Minutes of the 253rd meeting of Orford & Gedgrave Parish Council
held on Wednesday 13th October 2021 at 7.00pm in the New Room of the Town Hall.

Present: Cllr Anne Macro	Cllr Ian Thornton
Cllr Richard Mallett	Cllr Matthew Smy
Cllr Peter Smith	Cllr Gary Wingrove
Cllr Margaret Green	Cllr Scott Backhouse
Cllr Mary Iliff	Cllr Jonnie Howard

In Attendance, Marie Backhouse (Clerk), and 5 members of the public.

Opening remarks

Cllr Macro thanked everyone for attending.

The proposed development of the Friends garage site was discussed initially as an addition to the agenda.

Cllr. Smith gave a short resume of the current situation as regards the proposed development of this site. Four members of the Community are representing the village on this matter having set up a Community Interest Company [CIC].

An advanced development plan for the site had been formulated by the village representatives and presented to the developers over the last 2-3 years. Unfortunately, there has been little engagement over several recent months between the developer and the village representatives.

A new situation has arisen because the residential aspect of the site, Seaforth House, has apparently been sold independently of the remainder of the site. The commercial area that remains, which is a designated Community Asset, amounts to approximately two thirds of the previous area of the original Friends garage development site.

The developers informed the Parish Council, The New Orford Town Trust, the village designated four representatives (CIC) and by mail every house in the village (but not individual villagers) of a new plan they proposed in view of the new situation of Seaforth House being sold. This was done on Friday the 8th and Saturday the 9th October 2021. The information was in the form of a non-detailed glossy brochure with no dimensions or exact boundaries shown on the plan. There was a questionnaire attached which was an inexact opinion survey. Planning advice is that this does not constitute a valid consultation with District Planning unable to know who exactly is offering an opinion and whether they are actual villagers on the Electoral Roll of the Parish.

The plan sketched out in this brochure appears to try and squeeze the same number of dwellings as was proposed on the much bigger site into the present one third smaller site.

The proposed new shop appears to have been reduced in area by approximately one third with no storage facilities or office space and no area suitable for unloading vans and lorries delivering to the shop. Professional advice is that the shop as shown in the brochure is non-viable.

Preliminary advice from highways is that the proposed development outlined by Artisan for the developer would not get highways approval. The number of parking spaces designated in the proposed plan are inadequate for the number of dwellings, the necessary parking for the shop and visitors to the dwellings. Front Street would have enforced double yellow lines on both sides of the road and vehicles could not back into the main road particularly lorries and vans. The entrance and exit road appear to be smaller than is necessary though there are no exact dimensions on the plan. Concern has also been expressed as to where The Seaforth House Development residents would have an entrance and exit to their property. It could not come through the Commercial site development.

An alternative plan has already been outlined in first draft by our representatives and CIC taking into account the much-reduced site now available, reducing the number of proposed dwellings

appropriately and designing a shop of suitable size and facilities to be viable whilst taking into account the need for affordable housing in the community.
Funding for this new plan is being applied for.

Cllr Macro thanked Cllr Smith for his report and asked if the members of the public (MoP) had any questions.

The first MoP said that in the original plans the corner plot was to be used for the shop. It was to be purchased by the CIC for the village.

Cllr Smith said that the area of Seaforth House has been sold separately by the owner.

The MoP said that he had been working on the boundaries of the garage site and that the site had become a rat haven, with many of the doors having fallen off the buildings: the site is not safe.

Another MoP asked what the PC/NOTT required in regard to affordable housing.

Cllr Smith replied that there is a need for affordable housing but probably not small single bedroom flats but rather family sized two- and three-bedroom dwellings.

A question was asked as to what was happening to the fuel pumps.

Cllr Smith responded that the fuel pumps would be very expensive to put in and electric cars are the way forward.

A MOP stated that the fuel pumps would take up too much space on the smaller site.

Cllr Macro thanked Cllr Smith and the MoP.

4 MoP left at 7.22pm.

MINUTES

1. Reports from Representatives

1. County Councillor Andrew Reid.
Absent and no report received.
2. District Councillor Ray Herring
Absent and no report received.

2. Apologies for absence:

Cllr C Ambury and the Treasurer.

3. Acceptance of Apologies

The Councillors all agreed to accept the apologies.

4. Declarations of interest:

Cllr Backhouse – rent on the recreation ground.

5. Applications for dispensation:

None

6. It was agreed that the minutes of the 252nd Parish Council (PC) meeting held on the 22nd September 2021 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

7. Matters arising from the 252nd Parish Council meeting held on the 22nd September 2021.

7.1 Traffic Management – Cllr Smith said that he had submitted the Council decision to increase the lines in Gedgrave Road but was advised to include these in the next round of proposals, as it would mean the third consultation for this section of work.

7.2 Internal Control Statement – Cllr Smith said that this is to take place on the 3rd November.

7.3 Festival of Suffolk 2022/Queens Platinum Jubilee – Cllr Smith said that this item would need to be placed on future agendas for further discussion. The owner of the garage has given permission for the PC to have the metal post for the use of the beacon.

ACTION: Cllr Macro to approach a resident to see if he can move the metal post from the garage site. Cllr Macro to liaise with Mr Rumsey re a quote for a new beacon for the village.
7.4 Hedges – Cllr Howard reported that there is a very overgrown hedge on the corner of Pump Street and Castle Lane.

ACTION: Councillors to take photos of overgrown hedges and send to the Clerk.

7.5 Recreation Ground – Cllr Wingrove presented the floor size of the Flower Show marquee to the Councillors. It was 350 sqm.

It was agreed by all that a charge of 50p per sqm per day would be a reasonable price for hiring an area of the recreation ground.

Cllr Macro reported that the 'kite flying' had not been covered over on the recreation ground gate as, having visited two other recreation grounds, it was interesting to see that they also had the same signs.

ACTION: Clerk to investigate further the 'no kite flying' signs.

7.6 Cherry Tree on Village Green – The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted S Lord to complete the work on the tree, this was to remove the tree, stump and roots and level the soil ahead of the planting of another tree. S Lord confirmed that the tree removal would require permission from ESC, this would take 6-8 weeks.

7.8 Resignation of a Councillor – The Clerk reported that ESC had been notified and a Notice had been placed in the noticeboard, which expires on the 14th October. The Council may co-opt at the next PC meeting in November.

7.9 Look of the garage site – Cllr Thornton reported that he had found some green fencing that could go over the haras fencing and this would give a screen to people driving past. The cost for 2m x 3m is £30, it would cost about £600 to cover the front of the site.

Cllr Howard proposed that we wrote a letter to the owner of the site explaining our proposal, this was seconded by Cllr Backhouse. A vote was taken and there was 5 against, 1 abstention and 3 for; it was therefore decided not to proceed with the screening.

8. Contributions by members of the public.

The MoP commented that the no kite flying signs were placed on the recreation ground many years ago to protect the trees. Kites were becoming entangled in the trees and when people climbed up to retrieve the kites the branches were being broken off.

9. Finance

9.1 The Council received, noted, and approved the authorisation for payment sheet. Expenditure as follows: PKF Littlejohn (External Audit Fee) - £240 and David Bracey (Play area safety inspection) - £150 Total £390 Also, the staff wages of £1325.30 (summer months wages, winter months is £1134.12).

9.2 Quarterly accounts – The Council received, noted, and approved the quarterly accounts. The bank accounts at the end of September were as follows:

Unity Trust current - £16,403.38

Unity Trust (precept deposit account) - £28,000.00

Unity Trust deposit - £6,120.00

Barclays current account - £1,305.27

Included in the above is one year's precept reserve - £28,000 and traffic management reserve - £511.

9.3 External audit – The Clerk reported that the external audit had been received and there was a comment stating that there needed to be better payment controls and approval procedures. The Treasurer now provides the PC with authorisation for payment sheets ahead of paying the invoices. At the start of the financial year the PC will be informed of the wages cost as this is the same for 6 months of the summer and then 6 winter months. There is no overtime paid to staff. Invoices are to be presented at the PC meeting and these will be approved by two Councillors.

This was noted by all the Councillors.

10. Planning

None

Other notifications:

11. Parish Council Business: -

(1) Re-adoption of the Data Protection Risk Assessment, Data Protection Statement, Subject Access Policy, Subject Access Request, and Health & Safety Policy.

All the councillors agreed to re-adopt the above policies.

12. Correspondence

Orford General Store – Cllr Macro reported that an email, which was circulated to all, had been received from the Orford General store requesting the replacement of the current gazebo with a more suitable wooden gazebo. The size would be the same but it would have a wooden frame with a wood and felt roof.

It was suggested that the shop pays a peppercorn rent to have the gazebo on the village green, say £50 per year. Then if people questioned the gazebo and the PC's decision, they could be informed that the shop is paying for this to be in place. It was also requested that the PC when writing a response, checks to see that the gazebo is covered by the shop's liability insurance. Cllr Thornton proposed that the shop be allowed to position a more substantial gazebo on the village green with the additional comments made, this was seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed by all.

ACTION: Clerk to write to the shop and inform them of the PC's comments.

Cllr Backhouse commented that he had requested that the zip wire be tightened as it looked loose. The Clerk reported that this had not been raised in the Play Inspection Report that had been received. The wire was tightened about 4 years ago at a cost of about £420. It was agreed by all that the zip wire should be tightened. The Clerk is awaiting another quote to do this.

Cllr Smith asked for clarification that the PC are happy for the CIC group to represent the PC in future discussion with the developers on the Friends Garage site.

All the Councillors agreed that the CIC should represent the PC in future consultation with the developers.

13. Items for next meeting:

Festival of Suffolk Queens Platinum Jubilee, Friends Garage Site

14. Date of next meeting: 10 November 2021 7pm.

Meeting closed at 7.57pm.

Signed _____ **(Chairman)** **Date** _____