

Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of 13 December 2021, 7.30 pm, held remotely using Zoom.

1. Welcome.

The Chair of the Parish Council (Gerald Godfrey) welcomed those present at the meeting, which included all 7 Parish Councillors (Jacqui Harrison (JH), Rod Apps (RA), Penny Ward (PW), Colin Ward (CW), Andy Spinks (AS) and Lea Ingham (LI). There were no members of the public present..

2. Apologies for absence.

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2021 were accepted and will be signed by the Chair at a later date.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2021, and Parish Clerk's update.

1. [Item 4 of Matters Arising of minutes of 18 October refers] Rod Apps reported that he had not been in touch with Phil Greener regarding the possibility of renovation of the Notice Boards, but would endeavour to do so.
[Action: RA]
2. [Item 7 of Matters Arising of minutes of 18 October refers] Rod Apps outlined that the arrangements regarding the "Quiet Lanes" initiative appeared to be that Clarkes Lane would now be included in "Wave 3", and that Banters Lane would be included in "Wave 4". Rod Apps undertook to seek clarification.
[Action: RA]
3. [Item 5, Planning Applications refers] Rod Apps reported that Tithe Barn had recently been put up for sale, separately from Tithe **Farm**. The sale particular include the pond on Mill Lane as being **within** the curtilage of Tithe Barn, which is contrary to what had been indicated in the Planning Applications. Rod Apps undertook to send a letter to Mr. Derham concerning the issue.
[Action: RA]
4. [Item 5, Planning Applications refers.] Rod Apps confirmed that he had submitted the response to East Suffolk Council as agreed.
[Action: RA]
5. [Item 10 – Any Other Business - refers] Rod Apps confirmed that a rubbish bin for the Play Area had been obtained, and that he will put in up once the roofing of the Village Hall had been completed and the scaffolding removed.
[Action: RA]

6. [Item 10 – Any Other Business – refers] Rod Apps noted that he had not yet managed to photograph, and send to Suffolk Highways, details of the broken signs in the village, but would endeavour to do so.

[Action: RA]

5. Planning Applications.

It was confirmed that no new Planning Applications had been received since the last meeting of the Parish Council in October 2021.

6. Speeding/HGV issue on Top Road.

Rod Apps confirmed that he had distributed a Newsletter to households in the village outlining some of the recent initiatives taken by the Parish Council regarding the joint speeding and HGV issue on Top Road, and in particular to appeal for volunteers to join a Community Speedwatch team. Rod Apps reported that he had *no responses whatever* to this Newsletter, except for one from Tony Brown confirming that he would be prepared to join such a team. Rod Apps noted that Ringsfield and Weston appeared to have the same problem of an inadequate number of volunteers to form a Community Speedwatch team, but the meeting noted that a **combined** team might be able to generate sufficient numbers for the possibility to be progressed. Rod Apps agreed to contact Ringsfield & Weston Parish Council to investigate this possibility.

[Action: RA]

Rod Apps reported on the meeting at Ringsfield Village Hall had he and Gerald Godfrey had attended on 26 November. This meeting was chaired by Peter Aldous MP, with Judy Cloke (County Councillor), and two representatives from Suffolk Highways (Mark Nichols, Community Design Engineer, and Hugh Heaney, the individual responsible for undertaking regular inspections of the roads in the area), along with representatives from Ringsfield & Weston also present. The primary purpose was to discuss, with the representatives from Suffolk Highways, what possibilities there were for addressing the speeding, and the HGV, issues on Top Road. After the meeting, Mark Nichols and Hugh Heaney accompanied Gerald Godfrey and Rod Apps to “Brown Trousers Corner” and to Top Road to get their detailed views and advice.

The key outcomes from this meeting and visit to “Brown Trousers Corner” and Top Road were:

1. Suffolk County Council will undertake repair and maintenance of previously-installed features, but they will **not** pay for the installation of any new features.
2. Extending a 30 mph zone is difficult and very expensive, so is probably a non-starter. Creating a 40 mph ‘buffer zone’ is more feasible. Suffolk County Council would not pay for the survey and consultation work for this, though, nor (I assume) the installation of the signage. It *might* be the case that surveys undertaken recently are sufficient for the purpose.
3. Painting of 30 mph roundels, chevrons on the sides of the roads to indicate narrowness, ‘5-bar gate’ signs at the start of the 30 mph limits, and so on, are all feasible, and the impression gained from Mark Nichols and Hugh Heaney is that these *would* be appropriate and helpful. Mark Nichols’ advice would be to go for a large sign that included the name of the village and a 30 mph sign, rather than a 5-bar gate style. Mark Nichols’ advice was that chicanes and speed bumps would not be appropriate solutions, given the fact that Top Road is already (in places) really quite narrow, and the noise problems associated with speed bumps.

4. As regards the **weight/HGVs** issue, then something similar to a Traffic Regulation Order could be obtained. These cost £7,000 for each road – and there is Top Road, Ringsfield Road, School Road and Cromwell Road involved. If they are all submitted at the same time, then each additional road is charged at half price (£3,500). These weight limits (probably for 7.5 tonnes, except for access) would be on the basis of ‘environmental’ reasons (rather than ‘structural’ reasons (e.g. weak bridges). It was noted that the police – while responsible for enforcing such restrictions in principle – don’t actually do much, and hence they are only really worthwhile in conjunction with an active ‘Lorry Watch’ scheme. The Lorry Watch scheme seems to involve following lorries (to see if they stop for ‘access’ etc.), recording registration numbers, etc.

5. Gerald Godfrey and Rod Apps, and the two people from Suffolk County Council, stopped at “Brown Trousers Corner” on the way to Top Road. Hugh Heaney undertook to arrange for the holes on the outside edge of the corner to be filled in soon, which would at least mean that any vehicle forced to use that area would be less likely to destroy their suspension. The also committed to widen the road at some point in the future, although this would probably constitute Type 1 (or equivalent) rather than a real widening of the road (if Rod Apps understood them correctly). But at least the road would, in effect, be widened which would make it a lot safer.

Rod Apps reported that he had not done anything since the last meeting of the Parish Council regarding the possibility of a deployment of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system, but would endeavour to do so.

[Action: RA]

7. Dog Poo Bins

Gerald Godfrey confirmed that both of the two additional dog poo bins had now been installed.

8. Finance

The Parish Council noted that the following payments had been made on the Parish Council’s behalf by Rod Apps since the meeting of the Parish Council held on 6 September 2021:

Zoom subscriptions for October, November and December 2021 @ £14.39 per month	£43.17
Glasdon – invoice for dog poo bin due to be located at western end of Great Common	£278.97
Glasdon – invoice for waste bin for the Play Area	£201.10
TOTAL:	£523.24

The Parish Council duly authorised the writing of cheque number 100400 for £523.24 to reimburse Rod Apps for these payments.

The Parish Council considered the overall total payments made by the Council in the financial year hitherto, in addition to the anticipated payments in the remains of the financial year, as a prelude to determining the budget for next financial year. The Council noted that the total expenditures for the year will probably end up as a little over £2,000, which is broadly equivalent to the income from

the Council Tax precept for the year of £2,000. The Council further noted that the non-recurring expenditures this year constituted around £1,000. In determining the budget for next year, the Parish Council noted that it would probably need to make contributions towards the costs of addressing the speeding and HGV problems on Top Road, in addition to the possibility of works on the renovation and development of the Play Area, and therefore that it would be appropriate to make a modest increase in the Council Tax precept. After discussion, the Parish Council agreed to raise the Council Tax precept from £2,000 to £2,400 for the next financial year. While it recognised that this represented a 20% increase, it also noted that the precept had not been increased for many years, and that it would only represent an increase (for the 'average' Band D property) an increase from £17.71 per year to £21.25 per year, an increase of less than one penny per day.

The Parish Council further noted that, in comparison to comparable Parishes, Ilketshall St. Andrew's Council Tax precept was particularly low, due primarily to the fact that it had been fortunate enough to have had, for many years, the role of Parish Clerk fulfilled by a parishioner on a voluntary basis. Comparable Parish Councils typically need £5,000 per year to cover the cost of a Parish Clerk, equivalent to an additional £44 per year onto the 'average' Band D Council Tax precept.

Rod Apps undertook to submit the necessary request to East Suffolk Council.

[Action: RA]

9. Commons and Land Management Company

The Parish Council noted that there has recently been some clarification of understanding around the Commons Act 2006 in relation to the cases where Commons have no known owner (as is the case with the Ilketshall St. Andrew & St. John Commons). In particular, it is the case that the Parish Council is the 'guardian' of the Commons. The Parish Council has devolved day-to-day responsibility for the management of the Commons to the Land Management Company, but the Parish Council agreed that, for the purposes of securing the long-term future of the Commons, it needed to be seen to have oversight of the Land Management Company. The Parish Council would therefore receive and discuss the Minutes, Accounts, etc. of the Land Management Company on a regular basis in the future.

The Parish Council discussed a paper previously distributed to Councillors concerning major threats to the long-term future of the Commons. In brief, these comprised: lower funding for the Commons in the future; sufficient people within the villages willing to volunteer their time to act as Directors of the Land Management Company; and a reliance on local farmers to undertake the cutting of the grass at a low cost when needed.

10. Empty properties in the village.

Rod Apps had previously circulated to Councillors an e-mail from Suffolk County Council regarding empty properties. In summary, this e-mail noted that Suffolk County Council reviews properties that have been empty for more than 6 months, and that properties empty for more than 2 years become a priority. The email referred to cases where properties had been compulsorily purchased by the Council, renovations undertaken, and returned to habitable accommodation.

The Parish Council considered two properties within the village that have been empty for a considerable period of time:

1. 3 Great Common. This was purchased by the current owner in 2005, but was only ever used for short-term accommodation for a limited period of time following purchase. The estimate is that it has not been occupied in any way for at least 15 years. There is currently no electricity supply to the house, and it is causing dampness in the adjoining

properties either side. The owner does not appear to have visited the house for several years.

2. Methodist Chapel, Tooks Common Lane. Although this property has been subject to Planning Applications (the most recent of which was successful), no work has been undertaken on the property and it is showing increasing signs of neglect.

The Parish Council agreed that Rod Apps, as Parish Clerk, should notify Suffolk County Council of these two properties.

[Action: RA]

11. Any Other Business

1. Burial Ground. Jacqui Harrison reported that matters were still unclear regarding the receipt of the money for the funding of the maintenance of the Burial Ground, and therefore it had not been possible to advance this issue any further.

11. Date of next meeting

Monday 7 February 2022, probably 7.30 pm, by Zoom, but to be confirmed in due course.

The Parish Council discussed the frequency of meetings of the Parish Council, and decided that in future the *normal* frequency of meetings would be every two months. Moving from every month to every two months would reduce the time spent in preparing and distributing agendas, writing up Minutes, posting materials on the website, and so on. The Parish Council agreed, however, that if any matter arose that required a meeting outside of the normal 2-monthly pattern, additional meetings would be arranged.

Rod Apps agreed to check that having meetings every two months complied with the requirements for a minimum number of meetings each year.

[Action: RA]