

Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of 29 March 2021 held remotely, 7.30 p.m.

1. Welcome.

This meeting of the Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council was held remotely, using Zoom software, as a consequence of restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Invitations for members of the public to attend had been made via a notice on the Village Hall noticeboard and via e-mails to individuals who often attended Parish Council meetings. All seven Parish Councillors (Gerald Godfrey (GG), Jacqui Harrison (JH), Andy Spinks (AS) and Rod Apps (RA), Penny Ward (PW), Colin Ward (CW) and Lea Ingham (LI) were present. The Chair particularly welcomed Lea Ingham as a new member of the Parish Council. There were two members of the public present (Chris Roberts and Richard Green).

2. Apologies for absence.

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting of 1 February 2021 were accepted will be signed by the Chair at a later date. There was one correction to those Minutes: the final sentence of Item 9 should refer to the Parish precept payment of £2,000, not £4,000.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 1 February 2021, and Parish Clerk's update.

1. [Item 10 refers] Rod Apps reported that he had contacted David Bracey regarding the annual safety inspection of the Play Area, and he is now due to undertake the inspection in the 3rd. week of April. It was agreed that it would be a good idea if a member of the Parish Council met with David Bracey in order to get clarification of his recommendations, and therefore Rod Apps undertook to contact David Bracey to establish what day/time he intended to undertake the inspection.

[Action: RA]

Andy Spinks had undertaken some repairs to the Play Area.

Rod Apps had acquired some new signs (no dogs, and warning regarding ditch/pond) to replace the previous ones which had deteriorated. He undertook to instal these shortly.

[Action: RA]

2. [Item 12 refers] The Bowls Mat. It had been agreed at the meeting on 1 February that the Parish Council would defer a decision on the purchase of a new Bowls Mat, given the uncertainties around when the Village Hall would re-open and also uncertainties around whether there would be a sufficient number of active members of the Bowls Club to allow events to resume. Rod Apps confirmed that he had communicated that decision to those members of the Bowls Club that had been in touch (and in particular had provided a quote for a replacement Bowls mat), and the Parish Council agreed that they would need to keep the matter under review.

Parish Clerk's Update.

1. Rod Apps had attended a (virtual) meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner (Tim Passmore) and Mark Bee (County Councillor) on 19th February. Notable points from that meeting included:

- Some 40,000 speeding penalties had been issued in 2020, and to put that figure into context, it is equivalent to 10% of the population of Suffolk. This statistic was provided to make the point that Suffolk Police **are** undertaking a significant amount of enforcement action regarding speeding.

- The issue of HGVs and large vehicles more generally (including heavy farm vehicles) through Ilketshall St. Andrew and Ringsfield has, in effect, been separated from the speeding issue through the villages. In relation to the weight issue, Mark Bee is proposing an on-site meeting, once the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, with Suffolk Highways as a way forward. A weight limit is still being suggested. While this would have no effect on vehicles using the route for access, it would – if enforced – limit the through traffic using the route as a ‘rat run’.

- Rod Apps made the point to Tim Passmore that Ilketshall St. Andrews had provided data on speeding to the Police, but in essence it was ignored. Tim Passmore said that **analysed** data **was** acceptable to the Police, and that if I sent the analysis and details to Tim Passmore, he would take it up with the Police. Rod Apps duly did send an analysis and details, and got a response back on 3rd. March saying that Suffolk Constabulary has been asked for comments. Rod Apps reported that he had not heard anything as at 29 March 2021.

2. Rod Apps reported that he had attended (virtually) a “Planning Forum” organised by Suffolk County Council Planning. While this forum provided a quantity of useful information, there was no particular material to report to the Parish Council.

3. Parish Council website. Rod Apps reported that this is making progress. Now that the Parish Council is up to strength (7 Councillors) and that the Parish Council is likely to continue in existence in the foreseeable future, it makes sense to invest time and money into the development of the website. There will be some gaps in the website when it is first launched, and it is hoped that people from the village (not just Councillors) will contribute to the filling of these gaps.

4. Vehicle Activated Sign. This is due to be returned from Ringsfield and Weston imminently, and will be positioned on Top Road for a period.

5. Rod Apps reported that he is due to attend a (virtual) “Police Locality Meeting” on 19th April, which will be “an opportunity to discuss local operational police matters with representatives from your community policing team.” The Parish Council discussed whether there were any policing matters that it would like to be raised at the meeting, but apart from speeding, the Parish Council concluded that there were none.

5. State of the Roads in the Village.

This item had been requested by Richard Green. Richard Green noted that there were a large number of significant potholes on the majority of roads in the village, and suggested that a joint action could be undertaken with other, neighbouring, Parish Councils to persuade Suffolk Highways to undertake appropriate repairs. He also noted that a cyclist had recently incurred serious injuries as a consequence of a pothole on Clarkes Lane. The greater size and weight of vehicles using the roads (particularly farm vehicles) is causing distortion of the road surface and damages to the edges, along with the creation of potholes, along with increased flooding.

Rod Apps noted that the Parish Council **has** made attempts to liaise with Suffolk Highways to enhance the state of the roads in the village, but these attempts have not received any

response. It was noted that liaison with other Parish Councils was problematic since St. Johns and St. Lawrence do not have Parish Councils, and attempts to liaise with Barsham & Shipmeadow in relation to another issue was not being successful at the current time. It was also pointed out that in various discussions and forums, the repeated stance of Suffolk Highways was that there was “No money”.

Jacqui Harrison commented that it was now appropriate to write a letter to Suffolk Highways making clear the Parish Council’s serious concerns about the state of the roads in the village from a **safety** point of view.

Rod Apps undertook to attempt to liaise with neighbouring Parishes to communicate common concerns about the state of the roads in the villages to Suffolk Highways. Following a suggestion from Chris Roberts, this communication would also involve David Ritchie, one of the District Councillors for the area, and/or Judy Cloke, the other District Councillor for the area.

An additional consideration is that some of the roads in the village are included in the National Cycle Network, and that it might be worthwhile to also liaise with the relevant cycling organisations.

[Action: RA]

Jacqui Harrison noted that it would be appropriate to check that designation as a “Quiet Lane” would not lead to any further downgrading in the pecking order to get repairs to the roads undertaken. Rod Apps undertook to check this. Other Councillors observed that the roads in the Parish were already at the bottom of the priority order, so could not be downgraded any further.

[Action: RA]

6. Quiet Lanes Project

Rod Apps updated the meeting regarding the Quiet Lanes Project.

A Newsletter outlining the project had been circulated to all households in both St. Andrews and St. Johns, which also invited people to comment and gave notice of a (virtual) meeting to be held on 7th April. To date, negative comments had been received from 2 people, and positive comments from 6. The negative comments were on the basis that the increased street furniture associated with the designation of Quiet Lanes would give rise to further suburbanisation of the village.

Various bits of documentation had been submitted to the group of volunteers managing the project at County level, which included details of the proposed location of all of the signs. Following discussion with the project team, School Road has now been included in the proposal. Clarkes Lane will hopefully be included in the proposal from Barsham & Shipmeadow which will be submitted in “Wave 3” [Ilketshall St. Andrew is in “Wave 2”]. Banters Lane is more complicated, in that at the boundary of the village it goes into Ringsfield before then becoming Hall Road when it enters Barsham & Shipmeadow. Attempts are being made to liaise with Barsham & Shipmeadow for the whole of Banters Lane/Hall Road to be designated as a Quiet Lane.

It is still anticipated that the costs to the Parish Council will be negligible, but this is not definite at the current time.

7. Allocation of responsibilities to members of Parish Council.

Rod Apps had previously circulated details of the recurrent tasks that the Parish Council was responsible for and which hitherto Rod Apps had fulfilled. Now that the Parish Council had a full complement of Councillors, it was thought that it would be appropriate for some of the tasks to be reallocated. Following a discussion, it was agreed that:

Gerald Godfrey would take on responsibility for the Dog Poo Bin near to the Village Hall.

Andy Spinks would take on responsibility for monitoring the Play Area.
Colin Ward and Penny Ward would take on responsibility for the Vehicle Activated Sign.
Any “one-off” projects or tasks in the future would be subject to discussion, and Jacqui Harrison noted her willingness to be involved in such items in the future, in principle.

8. Village Hall.

It was noted that the Village Hall had received around £9,000 in the form of Covid-19 relief funding from the District Council. The Parish Council had given £2,000 to the Village Hall (mostly as reimbursement for insurance costs) on the understanding that the Village Hall will not be eligible for any Covid-19 relief funding.

It was also noted that during 2019-20, the total revenues for the Village Hall constituted around £5,000 and the total expenditures constituted around £4,000, generating a surplus of around £1,000. On the basis that revenues during 2020-2021 were zero (although it appears that there were some revenues) and that expenditures were also around £4,000 (although it is likely that the restrictions would have led to some reduction of expenditures), the Village Hall would be better off to the tune of around £5,000 than in March 2020, and the tune of £7,000 including the contribution from the Parish Council.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council should approach the Village Hall Committee to request the return of the £2,000, on the basis that the Covid-19 relief was not anticipated at the time of the payment and that the Parish Council may need the funds for currently unanticipated expenditures in the future. Such expenditure might include a replacement Bowls mat for the Bowls Club. An enhanced financial position arising from the Covid-19 pandemic of around £5,000 puts the Village Hall in a much-strengthened financial position, which was already sound when the pandemic started.

The Parish Council agreed that Jacqui Harrison and Rod Apps would liaise to draft a letter to go to the Village Hall Committee.

[Action: JH, RA]

9. Finance.

Rod Apps noted that he had recently received notification regarding the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Parish Council. The deadline is Friday 2 July 2021. Rod Apps undertook to try to finalise the accounts in time for approval at the next meeting of the Parish Council, after which they could be audited by Adrian Sampson if he is prepared to undertake that role again this year.

[Action: RA]

10. Any Other Business.

1. There had been a Planning Application, which Rod Apps had previously circulated Councillors about. The Planning Application related to the siting of a woodburning stove in an extension at Moat Farm, Tooks Common Lane. It seems that the application was required because the property is Grade 2 listed. The Parish Council agreed that it had no reason to object to the proposal, and therefore Rod Apps agreed to make the appropriate response to East Suffolk Planning.

[Action: RA]

2. Rod Apps had received an e-mail with an attached letter from the Government stating that “virtual” meetings of Local Councils would not be permitted after 7 May. The letter

had been forwarded to Councillors prior to the meeting. Members of the Parish Council were rather surprised at this development, and were not altogether assured that it was appropriate given the way that the pandemic had evolved over the past 12 months. The use of Zoom had, overall, worked well over that period for the purposes of the Parish Council. The next meeting of the Parish Council would probably be 19 April (and could therefore occur virtually), after which there might not need to be a further meeting until June, at which point things might be clearer. It was noted that there was a legal challenge to the ending of the permission for virtual meetings taking place.

3. There was a discussion around the issue of what to do with the e-mails that come into the Parish Council e-mail Inbox. Since the last meeting of the Parish Council in February 2021, approximately 300 emails had come into the Inbox. Of those 300, only a tiny minority (perhaps 4) had originated from within the village. The majority were trying to sell something, or were of no real relevance to the village. There were, in addition, some e-mails that **were** of relevance – including, for example, notifications of Planning Applications, and notifications such as that relating to the ending of permission for virtual meetings.
The Parish Council agreed that emails should **not** generally be circulated to other Councillors. Previous arrangements that involved sending the emails to another email address for everyone to then access did not work satisfactorily. Jacqui Harrison volunteered to look at the longer emails, or those that had lengthy attachments, to see if there was anything in them that might be of relevance to other Councillors.
4. Rod Apps noted that he had received a (physical) letter through the post from a charity requesting a donation, and/or offering assistance to run a fund-raising activity. The Parish Council discussed the issue of whether it was appropriate for the Council to make charitable donations, taking into account that the money that the Parish Council received was the result of the Parish precept to the Council Tax.
The Council agreed that it was not appropriate for the Council to take money from householders in the Parish and then make donations to charities, since householders were able to make their own decisions about which charities they wished to support and to what extent. The policy would therefore be that the Parish Council would **not** make donations to charities. The possible exception to this would be where every resident of the Parish would potentially benefit from the operation of a charity, and the example of Suffolk Air Ambulance was quoted.
5. Chris Roberts raised the issue of an item that had appeared in the March 2021 edition of the East Suffolk Magazine, entitled “Pardon the Weeds, we’re Feeding the Bees”. The item asked for nominations for additional ‘mini conservation areas’ where grass would be left to grow, and wildflowers planted, in order to promote wildlife. The areas would be cut back for winter and signs removed at that time.
After discussion, the Parish Council agreed that it would nominate the wide area of verge on Mill Lane opposite where Joyce Snowden had lived, and which had been regularly mowed in recent years. As a first step, Gerald Godfrey undertook to contact the person who had regularly mowed the area.
[Action: GG]
6. Concern was expressed regarding some developments on a plot of land previously owned by Keith Palmer on Clarkes Lane, on the edge of Blacksmiths Common. Under Keith Palmer’s ownership, a static caravan had been placed on the property, along with a shipping container. Information received indicated that Keith Palmer’s relatives are intending to instal another static caravan on the site, along with a log cabin. There are also concerns that oil and rubbish has been dumped into a ditch on the eastern edge of the plot, that the water main had been broken into to provide a water supply to the plot, and that construction materials had been moved onto the site. No planning applications for the site had been received by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council agreed that a representative should visit the site to establish what developments had taken place, and to alert East Suffolk Planning Dept to any issues that are apparent.

[Action: RA]

11. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 19th April 2021. This date was agreed in order to discuss the outcome of the consultation regarding the Quiet Lanes Project, prior to Project deadlines at the end of April.

There is scheduled to be a 'virtual' open meeting at 7.00 p.m. on 7th April for discussions relating to the "Quiet Lanes" Project. As at 29th March, no-one had requested the joining details for the meeting. Rod Apps undertook to keep Councillors updated as to whether people from the villages *did* intend to join the meeting or not.

[Action: RA]

The meeting ended at 9.55 p.m.