

Minutes of the Meeting of Groton Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7.00pm in Groton Village Hall

Present: P Roberts (Chair), S McGrath, N Chapman, C Hearn, M Mackay-Morris, A Dixon-Smith, R Jones (Clerk)

Guests: B Hurren (Babergh DC)

1. Apologies for Absence – J Finch (Suffolk County Council)

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interests - None

3. Minutes of the Meeting of 6th September 2023 - Approved

4. Receive Reports from Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council

4.1. Councillor James Finch provided a written report which was read and noted. In particular a discussion took place about item one of the report, *The Government has allocated £1.8mn to Suffolk to enhance the local bus network* a community-based consultation organised by SCC which was asking for comments by 5pm on 6th November (i.e., two days prior to the meeting). Councillors' expressed indignation at the lack of notice given and time for considering a considered response to this important village issue. The Council asked the Clerk to convey its frustration at the clearly inadequate timetable for consideration and response, particularly as the issue of school transport had been raised and discussed at the previous meeting. It was also agreed that, aside from the issue of school transport, Groton bus needs should be considered in the context of demands and requirements for a village bus service. The Clerk to pass these concerns on to SCC.

4.2. Councillor Bryn Hurren reported the following in behalf of Babergh DC:

- Swan Street in Boxford had been closed suddenly from Monday 30th October for emergency repairs causing chaos for people trying to access services or to get home. As he had not been made aware of the closure, he had been fielding many calls from irate and concerned local people. The problem was exacerbated by an alternative route being impassable due to flooding. It was pointed out that these types of issues would only be made worse by allowing more and more homes to be built in the area, with extra traffic being introduced as a result.
- Joint Local Plan had now passed the latest inspection. Part of the plan focused on Affordable Housing for which the Council had secured a 5-year land supply and reduced the amount to be provided significantly using 'windfall' sites. There was also a desire by Babergh District Council to allow more energy efficient adaptations, i.e., windows, solar panels etc., to listed buildings.
- Sudbury Post Office had re-opened permanently in the shopping precinct.
- Sadly, homelessness was increasing and the Council had been forced to house people in Bed & Breakfast

accommodation again.

5. Groton Traffic Assessment – Suffolk CC had identified two places for traffic assessment to take place. The Council had requested a meeting with the County Council to discuss appropriate sites for the assessment but there had been no response. Councillors' agreed that there were two separate issues:

- Places where the 30mph speed limit was not being adhered to and motorists were speeding
- Places where the national speed limit applied which would benefit from a reduced speed limit

It was agreed to tackle the speeding issue first and to that end, Councillors' proposed the following places for traffic assessment to take place:

1. The road between Partridge Close and The Fox and Hounds
2. Groton Street between the Church and the new Housing development

3. Church Street between the village green and the first junction on the right
The Chair to pass this information to Councillor Finch.

6. Questions from Members of the Public - None

7. Financial Matters:

7.1. Statement of Finances and Orders for Payment and Q2 accounts were approved as follows:

Unity Trust Current Account as at 31 October 2023	£5,879.13
Unity Trust Deposit Account as at 31 October 2023	£2,760.24
Nat West Current Account as at 31 October 2023	£614.40
Nat West Deposit Account as at 31 October 2023	£0.01
Total	<u>£9253.78</u>

Payments received:

BDC 2nd part of precept - £2,283.00

BDC CIL payment - £706.26

Bank Interest - £18.62

Cheque No	Amount	Payee	Purpose
300061	£22.80	SALC	6 months Payroll Apr – Sept 23
300062	£10.00	R J Jones	Clerk's Expenses Oct – Nov 23

7.2 Other Financial Matters – The Clerk requested permission to source and purchase a new laptop and printer due to ongoing reliability issues. The laptop is to be purchased by Groton Parish Council for exclusive use of council business, while the new printer will be purchased jointly with Edwardstone PC. Councillors' agreed with this request in principle and asked for the Clerk to send details of the proposed laptop and printer to be purchased so that formal permission could be granted.

8. Neighbourhood Plan Update – Councillor Chapman reported that the Housing Needs Assessment was due to end on 10th November. From 111 forms issued 24 hard copies and 13 online responses had been received. A reminder had been posted on the Groton Facebook page. Babergh DC to collate responses and add hard copies to the online application.

9. Planning Matters

9.1 Planning Applications - None

9.2 Planning decisions received - None

9.3 Any Other Planning Matters - None

10. Wildfires and Emergency Support Plan Update – Working group met in mid-September and a draft plan had been produced which would be discussed at the next meeting on 14th November.

11. Millenium Book 25th Anniversary Update – Four people had attended the meeting on 6th November. The original book had taken four years to plan and produce so it was felt that it would not be possible to produce anything by 2025. However, it was agreed to hold further discussions to agree how to move forward as there were individuals who were involved in the original project who had expressed a wish to help. It was also agreed to refer to the book in future by its title 'A Garland of Hamlets' rather than 'Millenium Book'.

12. Chairman's and Clerk's Reports and Correspondence - None

- 13. Highway and Footpath Matters** – The Clerk had still not received an invoice from Andy Adams for the footpath cutting. A Dixon-Smith to chase up.
- 14. To Set Future Agenda items** – A Garland of Hamlets, Traffic Assessment
- 15. Date of Next Meeting** – 10th January 2024

DRAFT