

**Minutes of the Meeting of Groton Parish Council held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm in Groton Village Hall**

**Present: P Roberts (Chair), R Cheeseman, J Long, S Price, R Jones (Clerk)**

**Guests: J Finch (Suffolk County Council, B Hurren (Babergh District Council)**

- 1. Apologies for absence – G Becker, A Dixon-Smith, N Chapman**
- 2. Councillors' Declarations of Interests in any item on the Agenda - None**
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 - Approved**
- 4. Reports from**

**4.1. Suffolk County Council**

Councillor James Finch reported the following:

Investment Zone Status – SCC in partnership with other district and borough Councils, had submitted an Investment Zone Status expression of interest to the Government seeking investment for already identified sites in key areas of the County. Locally, this include several sites in and around Ipswich and Sudbury. SEND – SCC Cabinet had agreed further funding to provide specialist spaces for Children with Special Educational Needs. There were concerns that an increasing number of Children were needing this service and that over 980 Children in Suffolk were in care.

Ukraine Crisis – A number of families were coming to the end of their initial 6-month sponsored housing period and would need to move to a new host. SCC continued to ask for more hosts to help the escalating crisis.

Speeding Cars – SCC had purchased ten Automatic Number Plate Recognition devices which would be used in hot spots around the County to deter speeding motorists. Persistent offenders could be reported to the Police and although no criminal charges could be brought, it was hoped that a visit from the local constabulary may encourage drivers to consider their behaviour.

Budget 2023/4 – SCC had launched an online survey asking residents which services they considered most important. The results would assist the Council in setting its budget in what were challenging times for all.

Foster Care – SCC was part of a national group of Local Authorities that had funded the creation of a short film called Childhood aimed at encouraging people to become foster carers.

**4.2. Babergh District Council**

Councillor Bryn Hurren reported the following:

Boxford Neighbourhood Plan –Formally agreed on 29<sup>th</sup> October with a 31% turnout and over 90% in favour. Tree and Hedge Cutting between Partridge Close and Homefield –a group of local people had taken it upon themselves to cut down overgrowth and had deposited the spoil on the Boxford playing field. This had raised awareness with the Housing Association of the lack of maintenance of the trees and hedges and work was now I hand to rectify this.

Budget 2023/4 – Although BDC had always managed its finances prudently and efficiently, there were some tough decisions looming as the cost-of-living crisis and energy costs continued to affect everyone.

- 5. Questions From Members of the Public - None**

**6. Neighbourhood Plan Update**

Thirty-seven surveys had so far been returned with most in favour of a Neighbourhood Plan and none against. In view of this, the following was agreed:

- Nigel Chapman to continue to lead the project
- A separate Groton Neighbourhood Plan Website to be set up
- Look at expanding the current working group to involve more Parishioners with disparate skills and ideas
- All responses to the survey to be collated with a view to holding a public discussion in January to assess the results
- Application for Grant Funding to be made
- Begin the process of appointing Consultants in lieu of Grant Funding being allocated
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## **7. Planning Matters**

7.1. Planning Applications - DC/22/05279 - Application for Prior Approval - Agricultural to Dwelling - Land and Agricultural Building, Parliament Heath. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q - Conversion of Agricultural Building to form 1No. Dwelling

The Council had discussed this application previously on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 and had objected as it felt that was not possible to convert the building into a dwelling unless it was completely removed which would not qualify as a conversion. Additionally, any such work would have an adverse effect on local wildlife and the environment.

It was agreed that the Council would continue to object to this application for the same reasons previously agreed.

7.2. Planning decisions received and noted - None

7.3. Other Planning Matters - None

## **8. Re-siting of Noticeboard**

The Chairman had surveyed the green where the War Memorial was sited and could see no reason the noticeboard could not be 'sympathetically' erected there. It was agreed that the Clerk establish ownership of the land before proceeding further. It was also acknowledged that the bench sited on the green needed repair or replacement.

## **9. Chairman's and Clerk's reports and correspondence - None**

## **10. Highway and Footpath matters**

9.1 Footpath Cutting – The Chairman reported that Andy Adams was carrying out one further cut and would be invoicing the Council imminently.

9.2 Highways Investment Fund – Footpath & Vegetation Clearance – Although there were no further suggestions, it was agreed to keep this item on the agenda until the scheme ended.

9.3 Other Highway or Footpath Matters – Concerns were raised over a local business placing advertising signs at various points in the village, some of which were obstructing sight lines for motorists and cyclists. The Clerk to report this to SCC Highways.

## 11. Financial matters:

11.1. Statement of Finances and Orders for Payment were approved as follows:

Unity Trust Current Account as of 30 September 2022	£9,097.07
Unity Trust Deposit Account as of 30 September 2022	£2,704.76
Nat West Current Account as of 30 September 2022	£554.80
Nat West Deposit Account as of 30 September 2022	£0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£12,356.64</u></b>

### Payments received:

BDC £2,283.00  
SCC £589.80  
Bank Interest £4.08

Cheque No	Amount £	Payee	Purpose
300029	£22.80	SALC	6 months Payroll Apr – Sept 22
300030	£32.45	R J Jones	Clerk's Expenses Oct – Nov 22
300031	£277.00	Zurich Municipal	Insurance

11.2. Other financial matters – The Clerk had obtained three quotes for insurance as there had been a substantial increase in the proposed cost from the present insurer. The quotes were:

Ansvar (via current insurer Community Action Suffolk) - £317.57

Zurich Municipal - £277.00

BHIB Councils - £395.28

After discussion, The Council agreed to accept the quote from Zurich Municipal.

**12. Renewal of Village Hall Lease** – The current ten-year lease was due to expire in September 2023 and had been dealt with previously by Gotelee Solicitors, Hadleigh. The Chairman agreed to look through the previous paperwork before instructing Solicitors although it was agreed, in principle, to use Gotelee as they held the current lease.

**13. To set future Agenda items** – Noticeboard. Neighbourhood Plan

**14. Next meeting** – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.25pm