

GROTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Groton Parish Council held on Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 7.00pm in Groton Village Hall

Present: P Roberts (Chair), G Becker, A Dixon-Smith, S McGrath, N Chapman, R Jones (Notes)

Guests: J Finch, B Hurren

1. **Apologies for absence** – R Cheeseman
2. **Councillors' Declarations of Interests in any item on this Agenda** – None
3. **Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd November 2021** – Approved.
4. **Co-Option of Councillors** – N Chapman and J Long were proposed and co-opted as members of the Council.
5. **Reports from Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council:**

4.1 Councillor James Finch reported the following on behalf of Suffolk County Council:

Covid 19 Omicron variant more infectious but mild, meaning more cases but less hospitalisations and fatalities. Pupils in Secondary schools were being asked to wear masks.

Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement – Statutory consultation taking place 'virtually' from 25th January – 21st March. Public meeting being held at Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel on 18th February to give local people to ask questions of the relevant representatives. Lots of local concerns over how the siting of the cables could impact the environment.

Budget 2022/23 – Proposal to increase the Council Tax element by 2.99%. Main areas for increased expenditure likely to be Adult Care Services, Special Educational Needs and Drainage and Footpaths. Proposals to be discussed at full Council on 17th February.

A member of the public attending the meeting expressed concerns over the proposals for the electricity cables impacting the environment and was encouraged to attend the public meeting on 18th February.

4.2 Councillor Bryn Hurren, on behalf of Babergh District Council, reported the following:

Budget 2022/23 – Council Tax likely to increase by 2-3%. Council costs were rising, particularly the Business Rates the Council had to pay national Government for Car Parks (£306,000).

Covid 19 – Council staff holding 'virtual' meetings where possible apart from certain committees such as full Council.

Tree for Life – Opportunity to have a tree planted for the birth of a child being kept open until the end of February.

Planning Issue in Boxford –

Joint Local Plan – Main focus is to build new houses close to the County's bigger towns but also to provide clear evidence as to why certain planning applications are refused.

Locality Budget – Applications being considered. It was suggested that money could be put towards a new noticeboard to replace the one outside the Fox & Hounds. It was agreed to include this as a separate agenda item for the next meeting as an appropriate site for the new board need to be agreed.

Planning Application in Sand Hill, Boxford – Permission sought for 64 houses. Application had previously been rejected after a High Court hearing. Still major objections as the plans still showed insufficient vehicle access.

6. Planning Matters

6.1. Planning Applications – None

6.2. Planning decisions received and noted – None

6.3. Neighbourhood Plan – As BDC officers were not attending face to face meetings at present, it was

suggested that Andrea Long, a consultant working on a number of other plans in the area, be invited to speak to Councillors. The Chairman emphasised that it was important that Groton PC took all appropriate steps before deciding whether a Neighbourhood Plan was needed in the Parish.

6.4. Other Planning Matters - None

7. Chairman's and Clerk's reports and correspondence –

7.1 Hedgehogs are us Project – A request had been received from this organisation offering the Council the chance to purchase 'Hedgehog Highways' which could be sold on to residents at a profit. It was agreed that this was not something that the Council wished to participate in as Groton was very open plan with lots of potential for Hedgehogs to move around.

8. Highway and Footpath matters

8.1 Footpath Cutting – It was agreed to continue using Andy Adams to cut the footpaths in the Parish.

8.2 Footpath Leaflet – It was agreed to close this item as it was felt there was already sufficient information on local footpaths available.

8.3 Other Highway or Footpath Matters - None

9. Groton Recorder – As previously reported, J Roberts had now taken on this role.

10. Financial matters:

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

Reserve Account as at 31 December 2121	£ 0.01
Nat West Current Account as at 31 December 2021	£6,229.67
Unity Trust Current Account as at 31 December 2021	£4,327.90
Total	<u>£10,557.58</u>

Cheque No	Amount £	Payee	Purpose
300004	£500.00	Friends of Boxford Primary School	Donation
300005	£450.00	A Adams	Grass Cutting
300006	£460.96	R J Jones	Clerk's Salary Oct – Dec 21
300007	£115.20	HMRC	Tax on Clerk's Salary
300008	£154.28	Business Services at CAS Ltd	Insurance
300009	£10.00	R J Jones	Clerk's Expenses
000857	£3,532.48	GPC Unity Trust Deposit a/c	Transfer of Funds to new deposit account
000858	£2,697.19	GPC Unity Trust Current a/c	Transfer of Funds to new current account

10.2. Adequacy of the Budget for 2021/22 - Approved

10.3. Precept and Budget for 2022/23 – It was agreed to increase the precept by £191.00 to £4,566.00 which would result in the cost to parishioners remaining the same as in 2021/22.

The proposed budget based on a precept of £4,566.00 was agreed.

10.4. Other Financial Matters – It was agreed to look at ways of using the Community Infrastructure Levy at the next meeting and to look at how the Council would celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

10.5. Any other financial matters - None

11. To set future Agenda items – Noticeboard. Community Infrastructure Levy. Queen's Jubilee

12. Next meeting – Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 7.00pm. The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

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