

GROTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held at 7 pm Wednesday 5 November 2014 at Groton Village Hall, Broad Street, Groton

Present: C Fraulo (in the Chair), J Osborne (Vice Chair), G Smith, A Dixon-Smith, R Kelsey, N Cox

In attendance: A Robinson (Clerk), J Finch (Suffolk County Councillor), and 2 speakers

Apologies for absence - There were none.

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest in any item on the Agenda - There were none.

To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of 3 September 2014

The Minutes of the meeting of 3 September 2014 were approved and signed, proposed by Jeremy Osborne, seconded by Nick Cox.

To co-opt a new Councillor to fill the Casual Vacancy

No-one has yet officially put their name forward so this matter was carried forward to the next meeting or to await the election.

To receive reports from:

Suffolk Constabulary - The Police were not in attendance.

Suffolk County Council - James Finch had circulated his report prior to the meeting, providing information on the Suffolk Skills Show, a skills and careers event arranged to engage Suffolk's young people and provide an insight into careers opportunities available locally. James advised that a grant of nearly £5 million has been made to help increase the number of shared bases in Suffolk for fire, police and ambulance services. SCC had agreed to a new £10 million contribution to phase 2 of the plan to secure high-speed broadband across Suffolk. James confirmed that discussions are continuing to try and make better use of Boxford School minibus to assist in transporting children in from the outlying villages. The Chair thanked James for agreeing to fund the new 30mph roundels from his Locality Budget. James explained that Kier were making progress with filling potholes and had invested in 2 substantial machines that can quickly repair the holes on a permanent basis.

Babergh District Council - Bryn Hurren was not in attendance.

To receive reports and questions from Councillors and members of the public

To receive a report from John Moles regarding the Boxford Speedwatch campaign

John Moles of Boxford Speedwatch attended and demonstrated the equipment used in speedwatch sessions. Boxford has the equipment for one week once a month and is prepared to share this with Groton if required. John explained how the Speedwatch sessions work and Councillors agreed to consider the matter and place it on the agenda for the next meeting.

To receive a report from James Salmon of County Broadband

James Salmon explained how County Broadband is set up and how he believes it could provide Groton and surrounding villages with higher quality broadband signals. Equipment could be mounted on the Church Tower, in agreement with the Church, and residents could agree to purchase receiving equipment which would need a clear line of sight as the signal is unable to pass through trees and buildings. The Church would benefit by receiving rental income and free Wifi. He explained that this would have to be a community based project with enough people interested to take the matter forward. It was agreed that in the first instance the Chair would contact the Chairs of Boxford and

Edwardstone Parish Councils and seek to arrange a meeting at Groton Village Hall in the spring, at which James Salmon would explain in detail how the system works and establish the level of interest. If there was sufficient interest a feasibility study would be held to identify the potential demand and location of that demand.

To receive a report from Jeremy Osborne on the September SALC meeting

Jeremy Osborne confirmed that he had attended the SALC Babergh Area meeting in September at which about 10 parishes were represented. There were presentations on strategic plans and affordable housing. He will attend the next meeting but will not be attending SALC's AGM.

Any other reports and questions - The Chair reported that she had yesterday attended a meeting with James Finch and the Chairs of the other Parish Councils in his area. This is to become a regular event to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing parish councils particularly with the push for localism. The Chair will arrange for someone to lay the poppy wreath at the Remembrance Day service.

Chairman's and Clerk's reports and correspondence

To consider the options regarding litter picking/proposed Community Caretaker Scheme

- Following discussion the Council resolved not to express an interest in this at the moment but to keep the situation under review.

To report on school transport issues - The Chair confirmed that an apology had been received from SCC regarding the error made on the first day of term.

Any other reports and correspondence - The Clerk confirmed that the website was ready for publication and Jeremy Osborne will provide the wording for the introductory page. It will then be published and advertised in the Box River News. The Clerk advised the Council of the pension update received from SALC as part of their Payroll Service. The Clerk asked if the Council would consider funding her attendance at an Election Procedure training session held at SALC in January (shared with Edwardstone Parish Council if they are in agreement) the full cost of which is £20 plus VAT. This was agreed. The Council agreed to fund the usual Christmas gifts and the Clerk confirmed arrangements for the Christmas holiday period.

Highway and Footpath matters

To consider the issue of speeding traffic including funding of 30mph roundels

James Finch has kindly agreed to cover the cost of the roundels from his Locality Budget.

To consider the provision of dog bin(s) at or near The Croft

Following consideration of public feedback and the cost of the provision and emptying of dog bins, the Council resolved not to proceed with purchasing any further bins.

Any other Highway and Footpath matters

The Clerk will report to SCC the 30mph signs on Fox Hill and at Horners Green that are completely hidden in the hedges, and will put a notice in the Box River News asking people to refrain from riding horses on the permissive path from the Fox & Hounds down to Boxford.

Planning matters

Local Housing Needs Survey - The Chair has chased Sunila Osborne but although she has passed the information on to the District Council she has not heard anything further. The Clerk will chase the Council direct.

Any urgent planning matters - Since the Agenda was prepared the Council had received notice of the following planning application:

Application no B/14/01334/FHA

Location: 5 Castlings Heath, Groton CO10 5EU

Proposal: Erection of single-storey rear extension

The Council considered the plans and resolved to respond to BDC with no objections.

Financial matters

To approve Statement of Finance and Orders for Payment

The Council's financial position as at 31 October 2014 was reported and the proposed payments were approved.

To consider acceptance and approval of the Annual Return

The Annual Return was considered and approved, proposed by Gerald Smith and seconded by Adam Dixon-Smith. The Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that she had a diary system in place which would ensure that the financial risk assessment would be considered and minuted each year (this had taken place in May 2014) and that the appointment of the internal auditor would be approved.

To confirm appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2014-2015 and continuing

The Council resolved to confirm the appointment of SALC as internal auditor for 2014-15 and continuing, proposed by Gerald Smith, seconded by Jeremy Osborne.

To consider the budget and precept for 2015-2016

The Responsible Financial Officer presented the proposed budget for 2015-16 to compare with current and previous years figures. After discussion it was resolved that no increase in precept was required, despite the fact that the Local Council Tax Grant was down slightly, as the Council had sums in reserve. The Council resolved to set the precept for 2015-2016 at £4149, the same as 2014-2015, proposed by Carey Fraulo and seconded by Adam Dixon-Smith. The Council also resolved to move £1000 from the current account to the reserve account, proposed by Jeremy Osborne and seconded by Nick Cox.

To agree future Agenda items

Community Speedwatch, County Broadband, Local Housing Needs Survey

To set dates for meetings in 2015

- 21 January 2015
- 4 March 2015
- 13 May 2015
- 1 July 2015
- 2 September 2015
- 4 November 2015

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.38 pm.