

Draft until signed

**Minutes of Battsiford Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 7th June 2016 at 7.30pm, Community Centre, Straight Road, Battsiford**

Present: C Knock (Chairman), B Rhodes (Vice Chairman), C Skinner (Councillor), N Cleaver (Councillor), J Olley (Councillor), C Nicholas (Councillor), S Zethraeus (Councillor), J Truelove (County Councillor)

Attending: J Budd (Public)

1. Apologises for absence

S Meech (Clerk) Cllr Cleaver to take notes in clerk's absence, D Whybrow (District Councillor)

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Public Forum

Cllr Nicholas raised the issue of the heavy rain that was experienced last week, Thursday morning in particular and how he did not notice any flooding at all in Battsiford last week. Cllr Cleaver added that there was a bad patch just past the Punch Bowl pub and that most cars were turning around and going the other way. Cllr Nicholas advised that this area referred to by Cllr Cleaver is not technically classed as Battsiford. J Budd advised of some further flooding down Mill Road, outside Rookery Lodge, this flooding was a result of a blocked ditch, which is farmed by Kerridges, north side of Nayland Drive. Apparently some local residents have been dumping grass from lawn mowing into the ditch. **Action** – Clerk to produce and send a letter to the occupiers of Nine Elms Farm, Ringshall Road/Charles Tye to ensure the ditch is cleared and to ask them to refrain from blocking the ditch as it is an irrigation ditch.

Cllr Nicholas has noticed that the village sign that is situated on Stowmarket Road has been stolen, it is the road sign and not the decorative village sign. **Action** – Letter to be drafted and sent to highways to advise that the sign is now missing.

Cllr Skinner raised that last Tuesday morning he was called out to Honeysuckle Cottage as the drains right outside Anthea's driveway could not cope with the torrential downpour, and there was at least 2 inches of water right throughout her bottom floor. This has been reported to Anthea's insurance company and Cllr Skinner has taken on the job of clearing up the mess, however, to clear to the level that the damage caused it will require 3 months to dry out and the whole downstairs will have to be completely gutted. Cllr Truelove spoke with highways on Thursday after Cllr Skinner alerted Cllr Truelove to the defective drains and they came out the same day and have agreed to arrange for the cleaning of the drains to be done. Cllr Skinner coned off the road in order to slow cars down during Thursday morning because even at greatly reduced speeds cars were still managing to splash water right up against the front of Anthea's cottage, making the flood damage worse.

Cllr Knock advised that he needed to speak with the occupiers of Garden House as permission is required for the highways department to come on to their land to clean the drainage system there and ensure there are no blockages. The water from Rose Farm comes down to the ditch in front of Garden House and highways need to give it some serious attention but permission is required for a digger to do the necessary maintenance. **Action** – Cllr Knock to discuss drainage issues with the occupiers of Garden House.

Cllr Nicholas advises that David Upson has confirmed that his property is in Ringshall for voting purposes but his rates also show Ringshall, however, there is dispute that his postcode is for Battsford and his property is within the Battsford boundary. Cllr Nicholas has written to Cllr Whybrow to confirm the situation as this is an ongoing issue relating to the re-drafting of the village boundary lines and where the rates are paid. No action required.

4. Housing Needs Survey Discussion

Will Thomas from University Campus Suffolk attended the last parish council meeting to explain data from the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) can be analysed from data that is input through survey monkey and he can use this data to produce a report. Following his attendance at the last parish council meeting he sent over a copy of the 2014 housing needs survey which has been used in various village surveys, the survey provided is actually a district council survey and has been used on larger projects. Battsford Parish Council (BPC) discussed with Will Thomas their concerns over requesting intrusive financial data and that the parish council wants to avoid distributing an unnecessarily long survey to residents. BPC advised Will Thomas that we had amended the HNS sent over from Gill Cook at MSDC from 68 questions to 44 questions, this was achieved by removing numerous financial questions, however, Will Thomas and Gill Cook are not supportive of this approach. Will Thomas was also not supportive of compromising with a covering letter advising residents that they did not have to answer every question on the survey. Will Thomas suggested that the results would be more comprehensive with a full survey and for reviewing the results. Cllr Zethraeus also raised the fact that it was implied that any legal challenge would be greatly assisted by a HNS.

All of BPC confirmed that this project is NOT just about social housing needs and is not motivated by encouraging the development of one and two bedroom houses, it is about identifying what the need actually is, if indeed there is one. Cllr Knock is clarifying and advising. Cllr Zethraeus questioned as to whether there is a minimum number of returned surveys in order to constitute a successful survey. No one could recall anything being mentioned regarding the legitimacy of the survey by return number.

Cllr Zethraeus mentions the last parish plan that was carried out and how this would have required a survey and questions how long the survey was? Cllr Zethraeus feels 14 pages is far too long for a HNS and that people would be less likely to engage in the completion. Cllr Knock advises that there were 28 pages to the last parish questionnaire. Cllr Olley participated in the 1997 census and advises that there was a huge response and he personally called and spoke to people and that was a much lengthier and intrusive form, highlighting that people do engage. Cllr Truelove advises that there is a huge difference in the office national census and the status of a housing needs survey, with the national census there is a legal obligation to respond, with the housing needs it is more likely to be disposed of.

The general discussion and feeling of BPC is that the HNS helps the district and county councils and third party departments more than the parish council and benefit of residents. It was agreed for the HNS to be carried out in stages, firstly carrying out a simplified survey, then the parish clerk would input the data into survey monkey and then analyse the data and then BPC would decide whether to go further with an independent report or further survey dependant on what themes, trends and patterns may emerge. All councillors agree for a more simplified survey to be produced and distributed.

Stage 1 – to devise a survey adapted from the original survey sent over from Gill Cook, condensing the questions from 68 questions to 44. Stage 2 – to distribute the survey around the village. Stage 3 – to input the data into survey monkey. Stage 4 – to meet and discuss the results and decide on a way forward.

Action – Cllr Knock to liaise with Gill Cook regarding permission to use her HNS template with changes made and sections cut out as previously agreed.

Action – Cllr Nicholas to liaise with Anthea Howard for an announcement of the HNS to be included in the Barclif for August.

Action – S Meech to publicise on parish website and notice board

BPC agree that it will need to be discussed further as to whether a covering letter should be produced when the survey is publicised. It is also agreed that the survey should be printed double sided, hole punched and treasury tagged in the middle and handed out in an A4 envelope which the resident can use and seal upon collection. A covering letter will be required having had further discussion in order to address the issue of those living outside the village but wanting to move in. Wording to be along the lines of “if you know of any previous residents wishing to move back to the village, please contact us for a copy of the HNS”. All councillors are in agreement that the potential person must have been a previous resident that wants to move back to the village. Printing can be done by Cllr Olley.

Action – Clerk to send email to Tim Durrant to check that he is still happy to keep on top of the grass cutting along the outside of the village green and Burnthouse Lane as drivers emerging from Burnthouse Lane on to Straight Road cannot see what is coming down Straight Road because it has grown so high.

5. Any other business for inclusion on the next agenda

- Play area on village green (primarily for payments)
- Defibrillator machine/cabinet
- Local resident’s vegetation growth around telephone kiosk
- Noticeboard outside church
- Pub benches to village green

Meeting closed at 8.50pm