**BATTISFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

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**MINUTES**

**of BATTISFORD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

 **held at Battisford Village Hall on 20th June 2023**

Present

Cllr J Cook (Chair) Cllr J Wilson (Vice-Chair) Dst Cllr D Pratt

Cllr J Pope Cllr S Zethraeus

Cllr E Kerry 0 Residents

 Parish Clerk T Davis

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| 2023/48 | **MEETING ADMINISTRATION** |  |
| a.b.c. | Chairmans Welcome & establish any intention to record the meetingThe Chair thanked everyone for attending and opened the meetingTo consider & Approve Apologies for absenceCouncillors were in full attendance, apologies had been sent by Cty Cllr OakesTo receive Declarations of interest on agenda itemsNone were declared |  |
| 2023/49a. | **To Approve the Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 16th May 2023 and for the Chair to sign as a true record**It was Proposed, Seconded and unanimously **AGREED** to accept the minutes.Matters arising from the minutes of 16th May 20231. This season’s cuttings had not been picked up on the football area and the clerk was asked to look into this with the contractor as discussions were ongoing
2. The Chair reminded the group that a date needed to be set for the play area working party tidy
3. It was deemed appropriate following NALC guidance that Cllr Wilson rather than Cllr Cook (Chair) would be part of the Staffing panel and this was accepted
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| 2023/50a. | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - For members of the public, County Councillors & District Councillors to speak**The Chair invited Cllr Pratt to speak. Cllr Pratt advised that he had attended the Battisford Village Hall meeting and was impressed by the sustainability ambitions . It was good to see that community groups had been set up on a collective communication group and that the new Village Hall Chair will be seeking to improve lines of communication with local parishes.The Chair then brought planning application under item 2023/52 forward. Cty and Dst reports can be found in the addendum. |  |
| 2023/52 | **Planning Consultations Received****DC/23/02636 – Application for New Vehicular Access, 2 School House, Straight Rd, Battisford**The Councillors discussed this application in some detail. The application had been reviewed as well as the plans and photographs had been taken of the proposed access. Council were very concerned that the access held mature Battisford Oaks and ancient hedgerow. Having access would cause damage to tree roots, high branches would have to be taken off for clearance of vehicles. The planning application (planning portal ref: PP-12176039) had stated that no trees or hedges were on the property and that no hedges would have to be removed or pruned.It was advised that a resident had requested the Battisford Oaks to be protected some months ago due to the historical significance of them being used to build the Royal Exchange in London in the mid 1500’s, which is why they are shown on the Battisford Village Sign. Council felt this should be pointed out to the planning officer. Especially when the existing access could be splayed.A motion to **Object was Proposed, Seconded and carried by 4 votes with 1 abstention** as follows:-The Information on the application from the applicant is incorrect. The application states there are no Trees or Hedges. This is incorrect. Photographs have been taken and they show clearly two mature oak trees and an ancient hedgerow.The council feel this application will cause irrepparable damage to the Trees and Hedgerow causing a knock on effect of lack of habitat and food for wildlife there.The Oaks residing in Battisford Village have historical value and significance as they were used to build the Royal Exchange in London in the 1500's. We understand this is already being looked at by the TPO officer David Pizzey, advised by a resident a month or more ago.The Oak tree is part of the Battisford sign because of this history and they are felt to be sacred amongst residents.The council also felt the existing access could be widened/splayed without the need for such unnecessary destruction of old and established flora and fauna |  |
| 2023/51 | **To discuss if the People, Place & Plan (PPP) is appropriate for Battisford**The Chair introduced this item identifying that in 2018 it was initially agreed with Comb Ford Parish to produce a combined Neighbourhood Plan. As this progressed it was then deemed that the two parishes were too different. Covid then hit and since then no progress has been made. The settlement Boundary which follows Battisford & Battisford Tye is also due to change and the current classification of Battisford Parish is for low level development within the Joint Local Plan which is being agreed at the moment. Council then discussed the advantage and disadvantages of carrying out a PPP instead of a neighbourhood plan. Such as no having the need to pay for experts, that the plan can be tailored specifically for the parish, that the parish could gain an identity as a dark spot/green space and protect the cultural and environmental significance of the Battisford Oaks. Cycle ways could be developed. Disadvantages could be that it is not yet formally recognised as having weight against unwanted planning and would need to be refreshed every 5yrs, Battisford might not have enough variety of assets and events or business to justify the hours involved to undertake the task.Overall the council felt that something should be put in place but that a not enough details had been given to make a informed decision. It was **Proposed, Seconded and Agreed** that a small working group would engage with Mid Suffolk Officers for assistance in the 1st Steps of scoping & progressing a focused PPP. The Chair would contact other groups in the parish to join the working group and to contact the lead officer to have a meeting. |  |
| 2023/53a. | **FINANCE****To authorise payment of invoice from Online Playground (Fenland Leisure) - £7,677.60**It was Proposed, Seconded and Unanimously **AGREED** for this be to paid. |  |
| 2023/54 | **Date of next meeting, Tuesday 18th July 2023** |  |

Planning Link: <https://planning.baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Addendum

1. **County Councillor K Oakes – June report**

**Revised policy agreed to protect Suffolk’s water supplies**

Suffolk County Council Cabinet has today (16th May) agreed to a revised infrastructure policy to support water security in the region.

As part of its focus on adapting to a changing climate, Cabinet members agreed a revision to the Energy Infrastructure Policy to cover future projects needed to protect and maintain water resources, including reservoirs, pipelines, and water recycling plants.

This new policy addition lays out how future water infrastructure projects will be managed and the council’s role with stakeholders, such as the water companies, Ofwat and the Environment Agency. It also sets out how the council will recover the money it has to spend in the planning process for infrastructure projects.

To reflect the changes, the policy has been renamed the Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy.

In February 2021, the Cabinet of Suffolk County Council adopted an Energy Infrastructure Policy, that set out the Council’s approach to major infrastructure projects for energy generation and transmission, with a particular focus on those consented under the Planning Act 2008, known as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

As part of that decision, it was agreed that the policy would be revised after two years.

**Library services protected as Suffolk County Council approves additional funding**

Suffolk County Council has underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, to enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024.

Suffolk Libraries currently receives £5.9m per year from Suffolk County Council, however the service is forecasting a deficit of £60k per month from April 2023. The service has cited increases in service costs, a reduction in income opportunities following the Coronavirus Pandemic and rising inflation, as causes of the deficit.

This means it is no longer possible for the service to continue operating at its current level of service, within its current contract value.

At Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet meeting, the council has approved plans to absorb this cost pressure, funding Suffolk Libraries an additional £720k per year, through to the end of the current contract in July 2024. This additional funding will support Suffolk Libraries to continue delivering its highly valued services to Suffolk Residents.

The council has previously made a commitment to continue to support Suffolk Libraries. At Suffolk County Council’s full council meeting in February, the council agreed to fund an additional £250k in the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year to help with the increased costs Highlighted by Suffolk Libraries. This £250k for the first quarter of the year is included within the overall figure agreed by Cabinet, of an additional £720k for the 2023/24 financial year.

The council also supported Suffolk Libraries with £155,000 for initiatives to support residents with Cost of Living and support for Digital Inclusion in the 2022/23 financial year.

**Suffolk residents urged to #ShakeItOut when recycling**

A new campaign by Suffolk Waste Partnership is encouraging people to empty plastic bags and not throw them in recycling.The #ShakeItOut campaign has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to encourage households in Suffolk to help improve recycling rates across the county by making sure black bin bags and other plastic sacks are not thrown in with recyclable materials. #ShakeItOut is encouraging people to shake out plastic bags and keep recycling clean, dry, and loose.The Partnership, which comprises Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, and West Suffolk Council, says more than a quarter (26%) of the materials in Suffolk’s recycling bins in 2022/23 were not able to be processed as they were spoiled.Items that contributed to spoiled recycling collections included:

 - Materials that were not clean and dry, or contained food and drink residue

- Rubbish sacks or plastic bags containing recycling

- Non-recyclable items, such as nappies and food waste

Plastic bags and rubbish sacks are a particular problem – recycling handlers can’t see what’s inside them and they are often full of rubbish or other non-recyclable items. This means bags are removed during the sorting process to avoid spoiling other good recycling. Any removed bags are then sent for disposal. To find out more about the #ShakeItOut campaign and for more information on recycling in Suffolk, visit [www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/shake-it-out](http://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/shake-it-out)

**Spotlight on improving air quality as county-wide strategy launched**

Suffolk County Council has set out its plan for improving air quality in Suffolk following results from a recent air quality survey, as its county-wide Air Quality Strategy is published.

Air quality continues to be an important public health issue and a driver of health inequalities which disproportionately affects some of our most vulnerable residents in Suffolk.

The county council recently engaged with Suffolk’s residents about their thoughts on the impact poor air quality has on their quality of life. The survey received 338 responses and had a particular focus on Ipswich residents, because Ipswich makes up four of Suffolk’s eight Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). AQMAs are areas where national target levels of Nitrogen Dioxide are being exceeded.

Some of the results of the survey showed that there is a need to increase awareness about how residents can reduce pollution by reducing indoor burning of wood and coal, encouraging businesses to replace their fleet with low-emission or electric vehicles, reducing short journeys by car and considering more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, bike or bus. Vehicle idling when stationary is also a contributor to high levels of air pollution, an area the strategy will focus on going forward.

A key element of the Air Quality Strategy is a public engagement plan which is being developed to increase public awareness of the health impacts of air quality in Suffolk, enabling individuals to make choices that protect both their health and the health of others from the harmful effects of pollution.

The delivery of the strategy will be closely monitored by the council to ensure it is accomplishing what it has set out to do. The strategy will also feed into the collective work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

**£10 million new funding to fix residential roads**

Local road surfaces in villages and residential areas in Suffolk should be blitzed as part of a new £10 million programme, Suffolk County Council has announced today (25th May).

The extra funding will nearly double Suffolk Highways’ £11 million annual roads maintenance budget but be targeted at smaller residential streets which are typically maintained less frequently than busier A and B roads.

The announcement was made by Suffolk County Council’s leader, Cllr Matthew Hicks, at the authority’s annual general meeting.

**Speaking about the funding, Cllr Hicks said:**

“Let me be clear, the state of some of our roads is not good enough. That is why today I am announcing a major investment to improve roads across the county where people live. Those smaller roads often in estates or off the beaten track in our villages that are rutted and in need of some love and attention. To do this we will set aside a further £10 million to be spent over the next 20 months reaching these locations across our county and I look forward to this being delivered with our new partner Milestone.”

The funding is subject to a formal Cabinet decision which will follow later this year.
There was also reaffirmed commitments to deliver:

* The Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft
* New homes on SCC land
* Further help for Ukrainian refugees
* A new highways contractor Milestone
* Hundreds more EV charging points
* A £20 million flood prevention and footpath improvement programme.
1. **District Councillor D Pratt – June Report**

**MSDC Annual Council Meeting**

The MSDC Annual Council Meeting held on 22nd May. The 24 Green Party councillors officially became the administration at Mid Suffolk with a cabinet composed initially of 6 councillors. Andy Mellen, as leader outlined our initial priorities to lead and work with other bodies to address the challenges faced by our communities: cost of living, affordable homes, local services, public transport and climate change. Cllr Rowland Warboys was elected as Chair of the Council.

**Charity support**

The Chair’s chosen charities for this year will be The Forge Workshops in Thornham Magna and ‘Beyond the Wall’, a charity based in the Walled Garden at Thornham Estates which works with people from 16 years and upwards who have a disability. The outgoing Chair, Cllr James Caston, raised over £4,000 for his chosen charity – Stowmarket Autistic Spectrum Disorder Saturday Clubs – during the past year.

**Half-term Activities**

A number of activities for children and young people were organised for half term. These included family cooking sessions, fencing, dance classes and kids’ clubs. Children who receive free school meals were able to swim for free at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre. Details of all the activities are available on the website <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/whats-on/holiday-activities-fund/>

**Community Grants available in Mid Suffolk**

Capital Grants – these are aimed at assisting community groups in making improvements and repairs to village halls, play areas, sports clubs, recreational facilities and other social infrastructure. They can cover to up to 100% of total project costs to a maximum grant of £10,000. Capital Grants are open for applications from the 1st April 2023 to 2nd June 2023.

Community Development Grants – provides financial support to help with the delivery of local place-based initiatives and activities, where gaps in provision have been identified. The grants is available towards either revenue (ongoing) or capital (new or one-off) projects. It can cover up to 100% of project costs to a maximum of £20,000. Applications are open for applications from the 1st April 2023 to 23rd June 2023.

Councillors Locality Award – the award will be open for applications towards the end of May 2023.

**Planning Committee**

Cllr Mansel is to be the Chair of planning committee and there is to be a change to the schedule of planning committees. The first daytime planning committee will be held on Wed 21st June and then every 4 weeks. In between those main meetings provisional meetings will be scheduled for 17:30 on the intermediate fortnightly Wednesdays.

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