

## Preston St Mary Parish Council

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### Minutes of a Meeting of Preston St Mary Parish Council held at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 24 January 2017 in the Village Hall

**Present:** Councillors McGrory; Bisson; Hanlon; Bardzinski and Luck

District Councillor Clive Arthey; Nicola Smith-Parish Clerk; 1 Member of the Public

County Councillor Jenny Antill sent her apologies but had forwarded her report for the Meeting

#### **1. Apologies**

- i. The Chairman advised the meeting that Cllr Mathew Shenton had sadly resigned from his post as of 24 January 2017. His work commitments made it very difficult for him to carry on in the role. Cllrs expressed their thanks to Mr Shenton for his input, particularly in relation to planning matters. Clerk will contact Babergh and a Notice of Vacancy will be posted in the parish. Cllr Martin sent his apologies. He was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments;
- ii. All Cllrs consented to accept Cllr Martin's apology.

#### **2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest**

- i. No disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the Agenda under discussions;
- ii. No gifts of hospitality received;
- iii. No requests for dispensation for pecuniary interests – not applicable for the Agenda under discussion.

- 3. Minutes of Meeting:** All Cllrs confirmed that they read through the draft Minutes of 25 October and 22 November 2016 and agree them to be a true and accurate record. Chairman signed and dated the Minutes.

#### **4. County Councillor, Mrs Jenny Antill's report:**

##### **Devolution**

As you are probably aware the proposed arrangements with Norfolk, about which councils in Suffolk consulted residents on last year, collapsed towards the end of the year due to lack of support in Norfolk.

However, following some encouragement from the Government, it was decided by Suffolk leaders that we should attempt to conclude a deal for Suffolk alone (that might include some willing partners from Norfolk and/or Essex.). At the end of November a number of councils, including the County Council, agreed to go down this road, so a dialogue with central Government is continuing. Since I do not believe that what is on offer is either true devolution or democratic, I abstained from voting on this decision.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The County Council faces many pressing problems at present, including sorting out the dismal highways situation and finding savings to fill a large budget gap, I am unable to escape the impression that the devolution discussion continues to be a major distraction and that we are guilty of fiddling while Rome burns.

### **The Budget**

A first attempt at setting the budget for 2017/18 was made before Christmas, and following further announcements from the Government with regard to funded has been recently finalised.

The gross budget has fallen from £1,104m to £934m, a reduction of £170m. This is largely due to the conversion of maintained schools to academies and the impact of the reduction in government grant that has been ongoing since 2011/12.

For 2017/18 There is a forecast budget gap of some £40m and savings of around £31 m have been identified. In accordance with the pledge made by the administration of the council ahead of the last election, the core council tax will not increase for 2017/18. However, recently, the Government has announced that it is to allow Councils to raise a specific levy in 2017/18 of 3% to help to fund social care. This is 1% more than previously announced. If we decide to apply this additional 1% it will reduce the deficit by a further £2m. but the shortfall could still amount to as much as £7m.

It has not been possible ahead of the elections in May to identify further places to save money and as a result it is likely that any shortfall will be made up by transferring money from the contingency reserve.

The savings that are currently anticipated for 2017/18 can be found in the Cabinet Papers for 24<sup>th</sup> January. These mainly represent a continuation of the transformation programmes that have been in place for 2 years now and other smaller reductions elsewhere. The problem of course with taking money from reserves is that the money can only be spent once and prudence dictates that the reserves be rebuilt. I think it is therefore very likely that further cuts in services will be announced after May's election and that council tax will be increased this time next year.

The finalised budget for 2017/18 will be debated by full Council on Thursday February 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Preston**

All has been quiet over the Christmas period from Preston

#### **5. District Councillor, Mr Clive Arthey's report:**

This report is mainly providing updates to 25th October 2016 report.

Chief Executive.

Arthur Charvonia, our new Joint Chief Executive, took up his position after the Christmas break.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Accommodation Review.

The move to the Suffolk County Council headquarters building, Endeavour House in Ipswich, is due to take place during August and September. There are still no firm proposals for the future of the Corks Lane offices.

Waste and Recycling.

The main driver for our original strategy was reduction of Suffolk's household waste to landfill. 2016-17 second quarter figures showed our total diversion from landfill has now passed 3 million tonnes. That is 3 million tonnes recycled, and also, more recently, through the Energy from Waste plant, that would have been landfilled. In 1999-2000 our annual diversion was 69,000 tonnes, but by 2015-16 was 347,000 tonnes annually, with only around 1% of household waste now going to landfill.

Devolution.

Whilst all Suffolk councils have supported the devolution proposals, the lack of support from Norfolk means the Government is assessing the possibility of a scheme for Suffolk alone.

District Electoral Review.

I mentioned the Electoral Review at your September meeting. The first stage is to establish the number of councillors for the district, and this stage will go to Council in February. The second stage, looking at ward boundaries, will start in May. There will be periods of public consultation before a final decision, and the new wards will be in place for the 2019 district elections.

2017-18 Council Tax.

Likely increase of 3.4% in Babergh's element, SCC +3%.

Preston St Mary – I did request that a Committee decision be made in relation to Applebough planning application, but that request was denied. With regards to the Swifts Manor Riding Centre, an enforcement team is checking compliance with the terms of consent.

Finally, the tax base figures were agreed by Babergh in order that the Precepts could be finalized. I note that Preston St Mary had a favourable tax base figure for 2017-2018 of 5.4% from Babergh.

Clive Arthey

**6. Public Forum:** No comments

**7. Correspondence:**

- i. Public Footpath No:13 had been inspected by Kevin Verlander of SCC. At the time of inspection access could be gained across the footpath. If the matter changes it will be reported to SCC again;

Signed.....

Dated.....

- ii. Public Footpath No: 12. SCC has sent a letter to the landowner requesting that the overgrown hedges be cut back, and that SCC will make a further inspection;
- iii. The Update on the Referendum for Parish and Town Councils for Council Tax confirmed that the cap (5% without triggering a referendum) which was being considered, will not be imposed for either larger or smaller authorities. It may be imposed at a later time, but for now it was not imposed but Councils were being asked to be mindful of increases;
- iv. A request had been received from several parishioners for sand/salt to be delivered to Rookwood Lane. Clerk had confirmed with SCC that it is on the list for delivery but that this had not happened and parishioners had confirmed that it was a problem that happened every year. Clerk had escalated matter with SCC. It was noted that some sand/salt had been delivered to the western end of Rookwood Lane (The Firs and the Triangle) but due to the recent weather this has already been used and needs to be topped up as we are not over the Winter weather yet. Clerk will liaise with SCC and will diarise for next year to try to ensure that a repeat of the situation does not occur;
- v. James Cartlidge MP will be holding a Constituency Surgery at Lavenham Village Hall on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 between 2pm-4pm. Posters are up on the village notice boards;
- vi. The Parish Council is required to have an external audit of its finances. BDO LLP have been undertaking these in the Suffolk area (to include the 2016/2017 audit). PKF Littlejohn LLP will be taking this over from BDO LLP for the Suffolk area as of the 2017/2018 audit for a period of five years.

## 8. Clerk's Report

- i. Cllr Hanlon has requested to attend the course for new Councillors at SALC. Clerk advised Council that all new Councillors should ideally attend this course. It is helpful in understanding the role of a Councillor and the powers and duties of the Parish Council. Cllr Bardzinski proposed and Chairman seconded that the sum of £100 plus VAT be spent. All Cllrs agreed.
- ii. Councillors considered and approved the schedule of items approved and awaiting authorization and report on the Council's financial position as set out below:

### Receipts since 1.09.16

02.9.16	Newsletter	36.00
05.9.16	Precept (2 <sup>nd</sup> instalment)	2150.00
		<u>2186.00</u>

### Cheques awaiting reconciliation/payment

100535	ICO Registration	35.00
100536	Newsletter Printing	36.00
100537	SALC (payroll)	18.00
100538	Clerk's Salary	214.08
100539	HMRC	43.00
100540	Newsletter Printing	88.20
100541	Heelis & Lodge (Internal Audit)	62.00

496.28

Signed.....

Dated.....

**Summary:**

<b>Community Account</b>	<b>4233.86</b>
<b>Business Saver Account</b>	<b>500.90</b>
<b>Receipts since 01.09.16</b>	<b><u>2186.00</u></b>
	<b>6920.76</b>
<b>Deduct cheques awaiting reconciliation/payment</b>	<b><u>496.28</u></b>
	<b>6424.48</b>
<b>(Total includes Transparency Funding of £1645)</b>	<b><u>1645.00</u></b>
	<b>£4779.48</b>

- iii. Precept as set out in the Minutes of 25 October 2016 were agreed. The Precept to be levied is £4700. The Precept form was completed and signed. Clerk will submit to Babergh and first instalment (half the monies) should be received by no later 30 April 2017, with the second instalment being received by no later than 30 September 2017.

**9. To consider and agree the 2017 PC Meeting dates**

Following discussion the following dates were Proposed by Cllr Hanlon, seconded by Cllr Luck, and all Cllrs agreed:-

28<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017 – Annual Assembly (Annual Parish Meeting)  
 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 – Annual Parish Council Meeting  
 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017  
 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017  
 30 January 2018

**10. To consider and approve the Emergency Plan Questionnaire**

The draft questionnaire had been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting. Chairman proposed and Cllr Bardzinski seconded that the draft be approved. All Cllrs agreed. The Chairman and Cllr Bardzinski and Cllr Hanlon will deliver the questionnaires throughout the village.

**11. Parish Councillor's Reports**

- i. Chairman reported that Caroline Gove who deals with the Preston Parish Paper has indicated that she will be retiring in the Summer, after three years of editing the PPP. The last edition Caroline will do is the April/May edition. All Cllrs expressed their grateful thanks to Caroline for volunteering her time on the PPP. Chairman proposed and Cllr Bardzinski seconded that a small gift of thanks would be passed on. Chairman stated it would be a shame to lose the PPP, and that an advert would go in the next edition looking for someone to take over from Caroline. If no one came forward then the Clerk will obtain quotations if possible for the potential costs of having a version of the PPP prepared on a quarterly basis, but the costs may be prohibitive;
- ii. Cllr Bardzinski raised a query as to whether the Parish Council had ever reached a resolution over the proposal for chevrons at Money Hole Corner. Following discussion it was agreed that Clerk will look into the parish records

Signed.....

Dated.....

and see what the position is and report back to Cllrs/further the matter on where appropriate;

- iii. Cllr Luck raised the issue of parking in Lavenham by the new housing development at The Halt. Vans and cars park along the road on the bend outside of the houses and the bend effectively becomes a blind bend with very little room for vehicles to pass. Clerk will email Lavenham Parish Council/Chairman to enquire whether SCC are intending to put any parking restriction road markings on that section of the road and report back at the next meeting.

**12. Planning Matters**

No new planning matters.

Planning decisions were noted on the Agenda.

**Next Meeting: 28 March 2017**