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PRESTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of Preston St Mary Parish Council.**

**held on 28 July 2020 at 7.30pm, in the Village Hall, Preston St Mary**

**Present:** Chair Cllr Martin, Cllr Tasker and Cllr Hanlon, together with the Parish Clerk, Nicola Smith. District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay remains “shielding” due to the Coronavirus but did telephone into the meeting and spoke on loud speak to Cllrs. One member of the public present. Kay Shorter who will be taking over the role of Parish Clerk as of 1 September 2020 was also present at the meeting.

1. **Apologies:**
2. Cllr Korwin sent his apologies due to other commitment, and Cllr Luck sent his apologies due to work commitments.
3. Cllrs consented to the apologies.
4. **To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest:**
5. Disclosures of pecuniary and non pecuniary interest for the Agenda under discussion – none;
6. Declaration of gifts of hospitality – none;
7. Requests for dispensation for pecuniary interest – not applicable.
8. **Minutes of Meeting:** to consider and approve the Minutes of the Additional Meeting on 6 July 2020 – Cllr Hanlon proposed and Chair Cllr Martin seconded that the Minutes were a true and accurate record. All Cllrs present agreed.
9. **Matters arising:** dealt with under Agenda items.
10. **Public Forum:**
11. Road near Rise Farm – road surfacing has been undertaken but there is a “mound” of tarmac and stones – does highways come out and flatten it? Clerk will get photographs and report on the Highways Reporting Tool;
12. Regarding item 7(i) of the correspondence and Model Farm new owner enquired if the Parish Council would now withdraw its objection as their main concern was the highways splays but that had not been disputed by the planning department under the outline planning application in 2018 and as planning had now clarified could not now be amended. Following discussion, Cllrs noted that there were other concerns and although this application may be for four bedrooms instead of the original five bedroom and on a smaller “footprint” than the 2018 outline planning they still had the same view that it was out of character and too large. As such the Parish Council, on a 2:1 vote agreed not to submit anything further to the planning department as their concerns remained.

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1. **District and County Cllr Mr Robert Lindsay’s Report**:

**Pension saves £20m**

I may have reported in the past that as a member of the Suffolk pension committee I was pushing the committee to reduce the pension fund’s exposure to fossil fuel stocks. I’m pleased to say that the committee decided to move some funds at the end of last year into a low carbon tracker “Climate Aware” fund. They moved about £260m in two phases with the second phase switching in January. This was just before the crash in global stock markets due to the pandemic which was led by oil and gas stocks. As a result, the Climate Aware fund lost about 17% in value, but the traditional funds from which we switched lost about 21% which meant we saved about £20m by moving.

**Cycling wins funding thanks to revised cycle strategy**

Two years ago, my motion to set up a cycling working group to draw up a prioritized, costed list of cycle routes in the county received unanimous support. After much delay the working group’s recommendations were approved by cabinet last month, just in time for some emergency funding for cycling and walking from the Government. The Government has just awarded the county 112% of the money than it originally located to us because of the strength of the county’s bid. The money will not fund all the cycle routes on the list but having a list means we are more likely to win bids when they arise. Babergh is working closely with Suffolk to refine the list and there is an opportunity for communities to put in their own suggestions for routes for investment using emergency money that is coming from Government for this purpose. A motion ensuring that cycling funding is sought from developers and other sources, proposed by my Green colleague together with an independent councillor at the July Babergh council was passed unanimously.

**Climate emergency – Babergh and Suffolk**

Both Suffolk and Babergh declared climate emergencies just over a year ago, Suffolk having agreed a motion I seconded. Both Babergh and Suffolk’s recommendations have in the past few days been published and approved and focus on council carbon reductions alone rather than looking at emissions from the wider community. However they are a start and I and my group intend to press the councils to take a lead in encouraging carbon reduction from the wider community.

**Funding and pandemic**

Suffolk and Babergh both agreed their budgets before the pandemic. Since then they have both received extra funding from the Government to cover the considerable extra costs of the crisis. However both councils say this is unlikely to be enough when budgets, particularly for social care, were already strained even before.

**Test and trace Suffolk**

I have been assured by the Director of Public Health that he is now getting the data on local community testing from central Government that he needs to enable local lockdowns should there be a local outbreak. However, I am not clear whether enough testing is yet being done, outside care homes, to pick up outbreaks in time.

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**Sizewell C**

Earlier in July a motion to end support for Sizewell C my group brought to Suffolk County Council was defeated by Conservative and Labour councillors. They argues that they first wanted to absorb the arguments from EDF in their application.

**New Joint Local Plan**

This has been subject to some delay and a new timetable was proposed at the July meeting of Babergh council. This will see the plan being submitted to the Secretary of State around winter 2020/2021. From that point the JLP starts to have weight when planning applications are considered. Since the autumn, the council does now have a provable five year land supply which is allowing it to be more robust in refusing planning applications.

**Babergh Council commercial property investments**

The Council’s property investment vehicle Cifco has been hot by tenants deferring rent for an indefinite period due to the pandemic. At the last council meeting I proposed a motion that called for the council to cease further investment in commercial property outside the area and instead to focus on building homes within Babergh. Unfortunately, this was voted down.

*Chair Cllr Martin enquired about the Cifco matter as he thought that Government had now insisted that local councils stop investing in commercial property due to the downturn in the pandemic. Cllr Lindsay confirmed that this was indeed the case but that Babergh were investing in commercial property they had agreed to prior to the Government announcement.*

*Chair Cllr Martin also enquired about whether or not there are community traffic wardens now in Lavenham. Clerk confirmed that Wardens were operational now in Lavenham, and they were issuing fines, so be mindful of where you are parking in the village. It was agreed that Clerk would ask PPP to put this information in there so that villagers were aware.*

1. **Correspondence (all correspondence has been passed to Cllrs ahead of the meeting):**
2. Email from Babergh Planning Department regarding application DC/20/02363 – Model Farm, Whelp Street, Preston St Mary, Sudbury, CO10 9NJ. Submission of details (Reserved matters application) for outline planning permission DC/18/03470. Access, Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of 1No. dwelling following demolition of existing buildings.

*An updated response from the highways Department had been submitted to the planning department. The previous response from the Highways Department objecting to the application was sent in error as the visibility splays for the site had already been conditioned for the outline permission. Any further comments from the PC? Please see response under item number 5 of the Agenda.*

1. Email dated 15 July 2020 from SCC Rights of Way and Access Team advising that the Development and Regulation Committee has considered the formal application regarding the claimed restricted byway at Brent Eleigh/Preston St Mary and decided

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to accept it. A Modification Order will be made in due course and a copy sent to the Parish Council.

1. **Clerk’s Report:**
2. To consider and approve payments:

Cllrs approved the following payments.

N Smith chq635 956.06 LGA1972

(salary between 11/04 and 31/08)

Catherine Hanlon chq 636 136.75 Open Spaces Act

(reimburse bulbs)

1. To consider income and expenditure to date for the financial year 2020/2021:

**Income**

Precept (1 of 2 payments. Next Payment due September 2020) 2834.50

**Expenditure**

Suffolk Association of Local Councils – annual subscription 127.94

Top Marques printing (PPP printing) 105.60

N Smith (salary between 29/01 and 10/04) 386.40

HMRC – tax and NI 51.60

N Smith (salary between 11/04 and 31/08) 956.06

Catherine Hanlon (reimbursement for bulbs for the village) 136.75

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1764.35

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1. **To consider and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Report 2019/20:**
2. To consider and approve Certificate of Exemption for 2019/20. Cllrs considered and noted that total annual gross income at £5363.93 and total annual gross expenditure at £4938.95 and satisfied that appropriate budgeting had been carried out for 2019/20. All Cllrs present approved the Certificate of Exemption for 2019/20. Duly signed and dated.
3. To consider and approve Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20. Cllrs noted the report and approved it.
4. To consider and approve Annual Governance Statement 2019/20. Cllrs considered and approved. Duly signed by Chairman and Clerk.
5. To consider and approve Accounting Statement 2019/20. Cllrs had received the Accounting Statement, cashbook for 2019/20, and bank statement to demonstrate closing figures for the end of financial year. Cllrs approved the Accounting Statement for 2019/20.

Clerk will submit the AGAR and other documentation to the external auditors prior to the handover to the new Clerk.

1. **Planning Matter:**
2. Application DC/20/02927 – Nova Scotia House, Nova Scotia Lane, Monks Eleigh. Householder planning application – erection of a detached ancillary outbuilding, single storey rear extension; erection of two storey front extensions and balcony and resiting of access (following demolition of existing conservatory and porch). ***No objections.***
3. Application DC/20/02682 – Bridge Farm, Preston Road, Kettlebaston. Householder Planning Application – erection of a single storey extension. ***No objections.***
4. **Cllrs Reports:**

Cllr Tasker reported that the signpost by the triangle of land (where the post box is) is damaged. Clerk will report on the Highways Reporting Tool.

Cllr Hanlon will put an article in the PPP asking for volunteers to help plant up the new bulbs in the Autumn.

Cllrs present thanked the Parish Clerk for the work she had undertaken on behalf of the Parish, and they wished her well for the future.

1. **To consider and approve the following in relation to the employment of the new Parish Clerk**
2. Cllrs consider the NALC guidance on spinal column points for Parish Clerks and agreed an hourly rate to be inserted into the contract of employment;
3. The draft contract of employment (based on the NALC contract) was approved by Cllrs so that the new Clerk could commence on 1 September 2020. New Clerk and Chairman will sign and date the contract.
4. **Date of next meeting:** 29 September 2020 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, unless otherwise advised.

**Meeting closed: 8.10pm**