

# ASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Assington Parish Council meeting, held on Zoom on,  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 7.30pm,

Present:– Chairman Simon Thorogood, Vice Chairman Andrew Hill, Cllr Bronwen Stacey, Cllr Rose Symonds, Cllr John Symons, Cllr Ian Jordan & Cllr Helen Wallace.

In Attendance: Babergh District Councillor Lee Parker, County Councillor James Finch and the temporary assistant Clerk.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** The new Clerk, Mrs Amy Benton which was accepted.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.** None

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 - To consider the approval,**

A correction was made to the minutes in the title, as the meeting was not held in the Village Hall “the meeting was held via a conference call”. The Chairman will initial the correction. The minutes were then approved correct by the Council and will be signed by the Chairman.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

**a. Speed Restrictions.** Cllr Hill informed that the county speed watch is currently on hold due to Covid. However a group of 9 volunteers has been approved. When it is safe to do so, the police will come out and give training on how to use the mobile speed camera.

**b. Quiet Lanes.** Cllr Hill reported that despite applying for all the roads in Assington to be granted “Quiet Lanes” status, only 5 have been approved. Marshalls Green, Assington Lane, High Road, Upper Road and Wormingford Road. The Quiet Lanes initiative encourages drivers of motorised vehicles to take more care and consideration of other road users, like pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Despite applying for Barrack Lane to be included, he has been advised that it is not appropriate as it is too close to the A134. Cllr Hill has challenged this. The Quiet Lanes Initiative is a good scheme which helps to reduce traffic but there is no guarantee. The Parish Council can expect costs of upto a max of £1000, this is to cover the cost of signs. However as the area is in an AOB, too many new signs are discouraged. It is hoped to install the new signs on existing posts and these will only be in appropriate places. CIL’S money could be used in this instance.

Cllr Symonds asked why Bures Road had not been included? Cllr Hill advised that the road is too busy and is a through road. He is happy to challenge Bures Road again but is not hopeful it will be included. Cllr Symonds suggested that "Beware Horses" signs be considered, due to the number of horses which use the road. County Councillor Finch thanked Cllr Hill for his work, he is also happy to challenge the Bures Road, please copy him into any emails requesting the amendments.

**c. Speed Reduction Plan.** Cllr Hill informed that since the SCC Highways officer visited the parish in December 2019 to carry out an assessment, he is disappointed that a report has still not been received.

There are 3 priorities, 2 of which are for a 20mph zone through the street and a “School Slow” signage near Pump Farm School. County Councillor Finch informed that he has been chasing Highways for answers to the site meeting which took place in December 2019 and can report that all the points have been logged. He has also been advised that Highways are not aware of a request from Assington Parish Council to take over the piece of land off The Street, next to the phone box and bus stop. It is considered as part of the highway. If the Parish Council wishes to pursue this, then they would need to apply for a license. The area would still remain highway but the Parish would be able to plant trees and erect a village sign and maintain the area subject to the license conditions. For the area to no-longer be highway, there would have to be a "Stopping Up" order, where the highway rights are removed and control over the land reverts to the freehold or leasehold owner of the subsoil - not the Parish Council.

County Councillor Finch recommends that next time a Highways officer comes to the village, let him know so that he can also be in attendance. Regarding the priority for a “School Slow” sign, he reported that the feedback is that the sign would be too close to the boundary of the 30mph limit, so would not be permitted. He is not happy with this as the students at the school need to be kept safe. He advised that speed data has been received further to the request for a 20mph zone through the street, confirmation is needed where the zone should start and end. He will chase for further feedback.

Cllr Hill advised that any funding which the Parish Council could use will expire, so hopes that Highways will not drag their feet too much longer. The Chairman suggests that a deadline date should be made for Highways to respond as this is going on too long and it causing frustrations. Would like a conclusion at the next Parish Council meeting.

**d. CIL’S Expenditure Plan.** The Chairman would like the Parish Council to consider an action plan for the CIL money. Consider projects for the village. Cllr Symonds suggested the purchase of an 'Assington Village Sign' which could possibly be located on the grass verge at the Village Hall (where the Christmas tree was positioned)? also as the Queens Platinum jubilee will be happening in June next year perhaps we could set aside a sum of money to provide a commemorative mug for each child in the village and possibly a souvenir for all OAP'S ? To be discussed at the next meeting.

Babergh District Councillor Parker informed that unlike the S106 money, the CIL money does have to be returned to BDC if it is not spent after 5 years. However it can be ring fenced to use for a project in later years.

**e. Neighbourhood Plan.** Cllr Wallace reported she is awaiting the report from the external examiner.

**f. Permissive Path, Three Ways.** Cllr Stacey had previously suggested that the land owner might allow a permissive path by Three Ways, upto Marshalls Green. This would help protect the local residents and make for a safer route to the village. The Chairman will speak to the land owner.

**g. Broadband.** Cllr Symonds asked if an update had been received from Better Broadband Suffolk? The Chairman advised that it has however, there are still parts of the village without broadband. County Councillor Finch advised that he has been trying to sweep up the remaining homes without broadband, please pass on a list of address & telephone numbers of properties who still do not have broadband. He can then pass onto Open Reach and find out when it will be installed. Cllr Symonds agreed to collate landline numbers.

## **5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR JAMES FINCH & BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCILLOR LEE PARKER - OPEN FORUM**

The report from **County Councillor Finch** has been emailed to all. He reported that Covid is still very serious, however the last 10 days have turned a corner and cases have gone down today. Still continue to remain cautious, hospitals are full. Vaccinations are being rolled out in the area. Stoke By Nayland hotel has been put on the list as a hub to administer the vaccine. A new resource is available to help youngsters with home-schooling. Primary School applications are invited ASAP. He is providing extra funding from his Locality Budget, during the pandemic towards food banks and minor household costs. This will help those on furlough or have lost their job. The Chairman thanked County Councillor Finch.

The report from **Babergh District Councillor Parker** has been emailed to all. He expressed concerns at protecting everyone during the pandemic. Brown bin collection has been suspended again for the foreseeable. Grants will again be given to village halls and businesses during the lockdown. Parking charges for the main carparks in Sudbury have not yet been agreed, cabinet to decide in 2 weeks' time. Possibly will include upto 60 minutes free parking. To be noted that Assington Parish Council objects to the parking charges. The Planning Appeal for The Case Has Altered had been refused. The collection of Brown Bins has been suspended for the foreseeable future and that refunds would be issued in due course. The Chairman thanked Babergh District Councillor Parker for his report.

CC & BDC Councillors both left the meeting at this point.

## **6. FINANCE**

**a. Statement of Accounts.** The temporary assistant Clerk only has the bank balances up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, Barclays Community Account £70,731.47, Business Premium Account £100.00. Receipts & payments from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December £2011.23.

**b. To Approve the fee of the Temporary Assistant Parish Clerk – Mrs Melanie Thurston.**

Mrs Thurston will give help and guidance to the new Clerk. She has over 25 years' experience and is at SCP 17 on the NALC pay scale. Therefore the Parish Council agreed to the hourly rate of £12.73, proposed the Chairman seconded Cllr Stacey.

The new Clerk has asked the Parish Council to consider using SALC to carry out the PAYE service, they charge £7.50 plus VAT per month, per employee. The Parish Council is in agreement to this.

**c. To approve the Precept Budget for April 2021 to March 2022.**

The draft precept budget had been presented at the last Parish Council meeting. It was agreed by all to keep the precept the same as last year £10,000. Therefore with the addition of more households in the village, it will reduce the council tax per household. Proposed Cllr Wallace, seconded Cllr Jordan. The assistant Clerk will complete the precept request form and send off to Babergh District Council.

**d. Approval of Internal Auditor for end of year accounts.**

The Parish Council is in agreement that Simon White will again carry out the internal audit of the year end accounts, April 2020 to March 2021

**e. Village Footpath/Grass Cutting – To consider putting out to tender**

The Clerk had requested quotes from the current contractor Mr Gotts and from a new contractor Hartleys Garden Services.

Mr Gotts quote is the same as last year, but nothing has yet been received back from Hartleys. It was agreed by all to carry on with the current contractor, as he has always given a very good service. However if Hartleys comes back with a much cheaper quote, the Parish Council may re think.

**f. Cllr Hill Expenses – Judicial Review.**

Cllr Hill has submitted receipts for which he has had paid, £296.32. This is for stationary, ink cartridge, postage and the application to the Royal Courts of Justice.

**g. Community Heartbeat Trust – Invoice to pay.**

This has been received to cover the cost of new pads and battery for the defibrillator.

**h. Cllr Symonds Expenses – Christmas Tree.**

Cllr Symonds has submitted receipts for lights & batteries, £26.66, which she has paid for. The Chairman acknowledged how nice the Christmas tree has looked time.

The above payments were approved by all, proposed Cllr Stacey, seconded Cllr Wallace.

**7. PLANNING – Update on applications**

**a. DC/21/00353 The Old School House, The Street Assington – Erection of two storey side extension.**

The application has been received today. Cllr Hill has had a look on line at the plans, which is for a large side/back extension. The Chairman advised that if the Parish Council wished to comment on the plans then an extra meeting would need to be convened. It was agreed by all to let the planners decide, the Parish Council will not comment on the application.

**b. Judicial Review.**

Cllr Jordan advised that as no response has been received from Babergh District Council, he has submitted the application for a Judicial Review. Now wait to see if the Parish Council is granted permission which may take 6/8 weeks. Large costs could be involved if the Parish Council is granted permission. Babergh District Council may expect the Parish Council to pay their costs and they have already presented costs of £5,525.00 (pre application).

Might the Parish Council consider a contingency based on crowd funding, but would people be prepared to support the process? The Chairman suggests that once the Parish Council has received an answer to the application then an extra meeting will be convened to agree a way forward. All Agreed.

Cllr Hill informed that he has been doing some PR on social media to get a feel for community support, which has been positive.

At 9.17pm Cllr Jordan left the meeting.

**8. FOOTPATH WARDENS REPORT**

Since the wardens have taken on the role in June 2020, they can report that the paths have been walked on a regular basis, although at present due to increased traffic created by ‘COVID exercise’ and the exceptional rainfall over the last few weeks, some paths are in a very muddy condition and care should be taken.

Footpath 12 - The Street opposite Church Drive through to Three Ways:

All 3 sets of steps have been renovated as they were considered unsafe. Fingerpost has been replaced and new railings installed at The Street end.

Also, the low stile sited near the junction to Vicary Estate has been replaced (old one had fallen apart) and thanks go to the farmer/landowner for undertaking this repair.

Matters in Hand:

Have requested replacement of the finger post on A134 opposite Marshall’s Green Road, which has been knocked over, the post is also rotten at the base. Have requested replacement for finger posts on A134 at Home Farm (both sides of the road).

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, 7.00pm Annual Parish Meeting followed by Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

Signed ..... (Chairman) Date .....