



# OCCOLD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON Monday 4 April 2022 in the Village Hall at 8pm

### AGENDA

1. **Roll call and Apologies for Absence.**

Present – Cllrs C Cripps (Chair), Cllr K Chittock (Vice Chair), D Griffiths, J Crouch, A Duggett, M Grange, S Hubner.

**Apologies accepted** – Cllr T Weller.

Cllr Andrew Stringer joined the meeting later.

2. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** - Members reminded of their obligations under the Suffolk Code of Conduct. No Register of Interests updates.

3. **Public Forum** – One member of the public was present to ask about planning application DC/21/06790. Objections against the application had been submitted and a request to call it in to the planning committee had not been actioned.

The Clerk responded that she had challenged the planning officer about this and had received the following response –

*‘With regards to your request for the application to be called in to committee, this was considered as part of the determination process. However, call-in requests are only valid when received by a member of the Council (i.e. the Ward Member. I did not receive any correspondence from the Ward member in respect of this application, thus it was determined under Delegated powers’.*

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-committee/scheme-of-delegation/>

Unfortunately, the District Councillor – Peter Gould has been off work for some time and so the request was missed. The planning officer did not bring this to the attention of the Council before determination. After further discussion it was agreed that the Clerk will write a complaint to the head of Mid Suffolk planning.

**Report from County Councillor Andrew Stringer.**

**International Women’s Month, and Day 2022 – #BreaktheBias**

In March, we celebrated International Women’s Month 2022. This year’s theme revolved around breaking the bias, focussing on a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. Our group was immensely supportive of this celebration. Suffolk GLI’s Spokesperson for Women, Cllr Caroline Page, called for the flag for Women’s History Month to be flown high next year at Endeavour House. Suffolk County Council agreed this was an important step forward.

**Cabinet 1st March**

The Cabinet met to vote on the disapproval of the current plans by Sunnica to build the country’s largest solar farm in Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire. Suffolk County Council have asked the Government to reject the plans in its current form, arguing the application fails to properly mitigate the impacts of such a large project. In addition, the Cabinet voted on approving the National Grid’s project to scale up its energy infrastructure from Bramford to Twinstead, as part of the Government’s Net-Zero plan to increase low-carbon energy in the UK. While we approve of the increased capacity for low-carbon energy, we argue that this rush into large projects is a result of decades of inaction from Government. This means it is now a lot harder to develop a coordinated plan with regards to energy supply, disruption, and sufficient mitigation. Both were voted for by the Cabinet unanimously.

**Full Council 24th March** Full Council presented a rare opportunity of solidarity between Councillors, as our Group and the Conservatives shared a single motion in support of Ukraine. Our Group recommended a motion condoning the actions of the Russian government, as well as commitment to supporting and welcoming

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refugees as they become a part of our Suffolk communities. The Conservatives supported our idea and together we showed how politics can be put aside through difficult times.

## Cabinet 29th March

The Cabinet met to vote on a plan to establish 'Freeport East'. This is part of a national strategy to create freeports across the country, in an attempt to generate economic activity through tax incentives. Felixstowe Port, Harwich Port, and Stowmarket's 'Gateway 14' Business Park are set to become part of Freeport East. Our Group is severely concerned with this project, as foreign direct investment is being prioritised over local businesses, many of which will find it difficult to compete with the overseas businesses receiving Business Rates, VAT and National Insurance Tax relief. The project poses many other challenges, such as potential increase in money laundering etc, a lack of clear strategy towards net-zero, and a risk of high-skilled jobs being imported, excluding the Suffolk workforce.

The Cabinet also voted on the Enhanced Partnership between SCC and bus operators, in line with the new Bus Back Better strategy, aimed at improving services across Suffolk. The improvement plan was voted for in October 2021, and this partnership outlines how the various stakeholders will interact with one another during the implementation of the improvement plan. Our Group have concerns on the Government's promise of funding, as no funding has yet been confirmed by the Department for Transport.

The full report from the County and District Councillors can be found at

<http://occold.onesuffolk.net/organisations/parish-council/district-and-county-councillor-reports-2/>

## 4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Clerks report

- a. The minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2022 were approved and signed.
- b. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting not covered elsewhere on this agenda and not covered in the Clerks report.

## 5. CIL Funding

- a. **Occold Conservation Group proposals.** Council received a presentation from Chris Hook outlining environment and conservation ideas for Occold including wildlife corridors, (joining up existing habitats) opportunities for leasing and rewilding pieces of land, replanting hedgerows at various locations, creating walks with double hedged tracks and seats, improvements to the recreation ground area, foraging walks for Autumn seed collections and Summer plant swops and an Occold/Oakwood Platinum Jubilee project to plant groups of Oak trees around the village.

Mr Hook will obtain some costings for his proposed projects and report back.

Mr Hook was thanked for a very comprehensive presentation.

- b. **To consider any other projects for CIL funding.** Cllr Duggett updated Council with costings in respect of SID devices. The new device (agreed last month) would require a Bluetooth data collection unit at an additional cost of £350 + VAT. After discussion the purchase of the unit was proposed and seconded and all in favour.

***Resolved – Purchase of SID data collection unit from CIL funding at a cost of £350 plus VAT***

## 6. Governance – No issues

## 7. Suffolk Highways, Speeding, and Road Related Issues

- a. The monthly SID report was presented by Cllr Duggett.

During March the SID captured 10710 vehicle movements. There was a seven-day gap, 15th to 21st, in the data collection which is unexplained. The highest speed recorded was 64 mph, between 04:55 and 04:59 on Wednesday 9th March. Eighty five percent of the vehicles passing the SID did not exceed 30 mph, the average speed was 23mph. For April the SID has been set to record vehicle movements in both directions and it will be interesting to compare the two sets at the end of the month.

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The full report will be published on the website. <http://occold.onesuffolk.net/organisations/parish-council/minutes-and-reports-for-2022/>

- b. **ANPR team re start date for project.** The Clerk reported that she has emailed the ANPR team and they have responded that they will not be operating until July 2022 and Occold will remain as a priority. It has been confirmed that the current signage in place will be sufficient for enforcement.
- c. **School footway safety project.** The Parish Council has received an estimate of costs for a preliminary design stage into a new footway from the school to the access to the village hall. This is in the sum of **£5,747.42** This would be a preliminary design to see if a scheme is feasible and doesn't guarantee that a solution will be achievable i.e. there is risk attached to this expenditure. If the scheme was assessed to be feasible the information gathered to that point would limit the further input required and reduce the detailed design costs. As a rule of thumb, they would look at around £100 per square metre for new footway construction.

The outcome of the preliminary design will allow SCC to assess the safety hazards and whether these can be overcome and to assess the need for new infrastructure from an asset management perspective.

After discussion with County Councillor Stringer (present at the meeting) Councillors confirmed that they would be unable to fund the full cost of any such scheme from either reserves or CIL funding. However, Council felt that the safety of children was paramount and therefore it was proposed and seconded that the Parish Council offer a contribution of £2,000 from CIL funding towards the preliminary design with the rest being met by the County Council. All in favour.

**Resolved – Contribution of £2,000 from CIL monies towards the design stage of a new footway.**

## 8. Items for Discussion

- a. Response to leafletting on Neighbourhood Plan – deferred to May due to leaflets not yet distributed.
- b. **Grant application from ORAC for Village Hall driveway repairs** – (further quote submitted). After discussion it was proposed and seconded that £1,000 of CIL funding be offered to ORAC on completion of the necessary works.

**Resolved – contribution of £1,000 from CIL monies on completion of village hall driveway repairs.**

## 9. Planning - can be viewed at <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/development-management/application-search-and-comment/>

### a. New applications – None

### b. Granted applications

Reference	Address	Date received	PC Meeting	Response	MSDC Decision	Date
DC/21/06790	7 Old Rectory Gardens	Jan 22	7/2/22	Request to call into committee	Granted	11/3/22

## 10. Financial Matters –

- a. The unaudited Financial Report for Year End 2021-22 was received. Current balance at the bank is £20642.20 of which £11501.59 is subject of CIL funding.
- b. The services of external auditor Trevor Brown at a cost of £170.00 for audit of accounts 2021-22 was approved.
- c. The following payments (General Power of Competence applies) were approved.

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PAYMENTS	£GROSS	£VAT	£NET	WHAT FOR
Occold Rector and Church wardens	1400.00		1400.00	Grant application – Insurance costs
Occold Rector and Church wardens	598.00		598.00	Grass/hedge maintenance – Churchyard and Cemetery
Suffolk County Council	274.85	45.80	229.05	Street lighting costs 2021-22
Staff salary	293.32		293.32	Clerk Salary - March
Clerk expenses	62.98	0.50	62.48	Office costs Q4 and leaflets
RECEIPTS - Nil				

## 11. Correspondence – received since the last Meeting.

Date	From	Detail	Actions, if any
25/3/22	MSDC	Community Governance Review	Noted.
23/3/22	DC	Queens Jubilee Funding – query whether the PC has a Platinum Jubilee budget	The Parish Council does not currently have a budget for the Platinum Jubilee and is unable to make any contributions to funding.

## 12. Date of next meeting – The next Parish Council meeting will be the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 9 May 2022

Clerk will arrange invitations to local organisations to attend and give their reports

**The meeting closed at 9.45pm**

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