

# GAZELEY PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Gazeley Parish Council Held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 in Gazeley Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr Kevin Grimwood, Cllr Paul Beard, Cllr Ray Francis, Cllr Wesley Heaton, Cllr Pat Spillane and Cllr Judy Moatt

**In attendance:** Lynne Francis (Clerk), Cllr Roger Dicker and 5 members of the public.

The meeting was opened by Cllr Kevin Grimwood who welcomed everyone present and indicated the exit routes from the building in case of an emergency.

<b>21.AM.1</b>	<b>Election of Chairman</b> Nominations: Cllr Spillane proposed that Cllr Kevin Grimwood be elected as Chairman for the year. This was seconded by Cllr Paul Beard. There were no further nominations and Cllr Grimwood indicated his willingness to take office. <b>Resolved,</b> by a majority of councillors present, That Cllr Grimwood be elected Chairman for the year.
<b>21.AM.2</b>	<b>To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</b> The Declaration was signed and counter-signed by the clerk.
<b>21.AM.3</b>	<b>Chairman's Welcome and Acceptance of Apologies for Absence.</b> Cllr Grimwood took the chair and there were no apologies for absence.
<b>21.AM.4</b>	<b>Election of Vice-Chairman.</b> Cllr Spillane proposed that Cllr Paul Beard be elected as Vice-Chair. Cllr Wesley Heaton seconded the proposal. Cllr Paul Beard was duly elected as Vice-Chair.
<b>21.AM.5</b>	<b>To receive Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</b> The Declaration was signed and counter-signed by the clerk.
<b>21.AM.6</b>	<b>Appointment of working groups.</b> It was agreed that one councillor would take the lead in the following: Risk Assessment and Assets: Cllr Heaton Recreation Ground and Playing Field: Cllr Spillane. Defibrillator: Cllr Spillane Representative on the Village Hall Committee: Cllr Moatt
<b>21.AM.7</b>	<b>Financial Matters</b> <b>1. To approve the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.</b> <b>Resolved:</b> That the Annual Governance Statement be adopted by the Parish Council. The Statement was signed by the Chairman and counter-signed by the clerk.  <b>2. To approve the Accounting Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.</b> <b>Resolved:</b> That the Accounting Statement be adopted by the Parish Council. The Statement was signed by the Chairman and counter-signed by the clerk.  <b>3. To review the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.</b> The Parish Council is confident that every precaution has been taken to minimise risk and that the accounts are properly prepared and approved by the Council.

	<p><b>4. To sign the Certificate of Exemption for Smaller Authorities.</b> As a Smaller Authority with gross income and expenditure under £25,000, the Parish Council is exempt from a limited assurance review by an external auditor. The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Chairman and counter-signed by the clerk. It will now be forwarded to PKF Littlejohn.</p> <p><b>5. Authorisation of Outstanding Payments</b> The clerk presented the monthly accounts for signature, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. The corresponding cheques were signed by Cllr Spillane and Cllr Judy Moatt.</p>
<b>21.AM.8</b>	<p><b>To confirm Parish Council Meeting Dates for the forthcoming year.</b> The Parish Council will continue to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month, with the exception of August.</p>
<b>21.AM.9</b>	<p><b>Parish Matters</b></p> <p><b>1. To approve the minutes of the virtual meeting of the parish council of 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021.</b> The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p><b>2. Clerk's update on outstanding issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The clerk reported that Mulleys had instructed their insurers to settle our claim for the repair of the wall on the village green that had been damaged by one of their buses.</li> <li>• Reports have been received that the owner of the forge is moving the safety fencing to allow for movement of the Landover in and out of the site. He is also parking on the hard-standing of the bus stop and the three dogs are being given access to the bus shelter which is out of action for members of the public. Complaints have been forwarded to WSC.</li> <li>• The clerk has written to Cllr Colin Noble asking him to confirm that he will still be funding the traffic calming measures as agreed last November.</li> <li>• The clerk had noted that the parish council was not consulted when a two-story extension had been constructed at 7 Mill Road last year, although the Newmarket Ramblers Group apparently had been consulted. The planning officer had confirmed that this was an oversight and apologised for the error.</li> <li>• The Footpath Secretary of the Ramblers' Newmarket and District Group has contacted the parish council to ask for support in seeking a solution to a dangerous situation that he fears has arisen with changes to the Phoenix Cycle Track project in Kentford. The situation was not entirely clear from plans on the website and Cllr Dicker agreed to investigate the situation.</li> <li>• A waymarker post, pointing the way to the Three Churches Walk and the Icknield Way Path has fallen down near the path between nos. 25 and 26 Tithe Close. The clerk had drawn this to the attention of the Highways department and had been told that only posts considered essential to define the route of a footpath would be replaced. The clerk had pointed out the importance of the path and the fact that without the post it would be almost invisible from the road and had asked them to reconsider their decision not to replace it.</li> <li>• A resident had contacted the clerk to ask how to obtain permission to plant wild flower swathes across the green at Tithe Close. She had directed him to West Suffolk Council as the green is in their ownership.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Election for vacancy on the parish council.</b> It was noted that ten residents of Sperrinks Close had sent a petition to West Suffolk Council to hold an election to fill the current vacancy on the parish council. If contested, this will cost the parish £2,500. If it is uncontested then the parish council will have to pay the administration costs which will amount to something in the region of £100. If no nomination forms are received by WSC then the vacancy will be advertised again in 35 days.</p>

<b>21.AM.10</b>	<p><b>Councillors' Reports</b></p> <p>Cllr Heaton referred to the recent reports and comments on Facebook about the continuing speeding of cars through the village and noted that it seems as if speeds are on the rise again.</p> <p>Cllr Spillane referred to the condition of the footpaths map on the green. He offered to refurbish it at his own expense if it was thought appropriate to note that the work had been sponsored by The Chequers. This was agreed.</p> <p>Cllr Dicker noted that he now had a new budget and is open to applications from village organisations. All the public buildings in Mildenhall will come under the Mildenhall Hub in future.</p> <p>Cllr Dicker had not received an update on the forge but the clerk had received an email to say that the situation was under constant review by various departments of the council although there was no progress to report as such.</p> <p>The enclosure of the bus shelter is particularly unacceptable as it was only envisaged to be of short duration during a period of very high winds. The clerk will write to West Suffolk to express the parish council's concern at the lack of progress in resolving the situation.</p>
<b>21.AM.11</b>	<p><b>To confirm the date of the next meeting of the Parish Council.</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.</p>

# APPENDIX 1 - FINANCIAL REPORT – MAY 2021

## PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

MAY

2021

Payments	Amount	Cheque No.	Receipts	Balance
Mr P. Rayson	£ 1,400.00	1206		
Mr P Jaye	£ 550.00	1207		
All Saints' Church, Gazeley	£ 400.00	1208		
S.P. Landscapes, April	£ 111.00	1209		

## Receipts

Interest	£ 0.09
West Suffolk Council	£ 15,800.00

<b>Totals</b>	<b>£ 2,461.00</b>	<b>£ 15,800.09</b>
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## Balance of Accounts

Treasurer's Account 1	£ 3,947.76
Treasurer's Account 2	£ 80.43
Instant Access Account	£ 27,190.07
<b>Total Balance of Accounts at 31.4.21</b>	<b>£ 31,218.26</b>

## **APPENDIX 2 - Extracts from an Annual Report by the Leader of West Suffolk Council to Members**

### **COVID-19**

This has been an incredibly hard and challenging year for West Suffolk, but you and our staff should take pride in the many roles we have played in supporting our communities and businesses while delivering services in pandemic conditions.

We will get much more about this in the coming months as we prepare the annual report but to look at it in numbers – we have helped businesses access £105million in grant and business rate relief. Some 600 food businesses were provided with advice on how to switch to takeaway and delivery services, and around 300 hospitality businesses were undertaken to ensure adherence with COVID-19 restrictions to protect local people. Of course, we also continued to deliver our ambitious programme and services, often punching above our weight, while dealing with the pandemic.

We have also secured £205,000 from the Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund to aid recovery and bring new prosperity to West Suffolk's town centres.

We have supported the most vulnerable, working with over 600 volunteer groups and organisations as part of 'Home but Not Alone' and our families and communities work – with over 2035 calls handled on the 'Home but Not Alone' telephone line and some 120 emergency food parcels delivered.

We continued to collect thousands of bins a week despite the challenges of COVID and, when safe to do so, opened our markets in all our towns seeing an increase in new traders. Our parks stayed open and not only achieved National Green Flag Awards but were essential for people to improve their well-being and mental health during the pandemic. All of this was highly valued by many in our communities and businesses who showed their appreciation in several ways from social media posts to pictures on bins.

We secured £425,000 funding from a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy grant and will deliver a park home insulation scheme across three parks. This was part of a £1.2 million bid where West Suffolk was the lead authority to help achieve our environmental goals.

We completed the £2 million upgrade of Brandon Leisure Centre this year – part of a multi-million investment in health and wellbeing across West Suffolk.

Our Local Plan – due to the pandemic we innovated with online engagement which saw around 3,400 people give written comments – more than we have ever had before and reaching people we had not engaged with so effectively before.

Despite restrictions on construction, we have forged ahead with various much needed projects, such as the innovative Mildenhall Hub which is due to open this year and is a nationally ground-breaking achievement.

### **Affordable Homes**

As you know the Council secures affordable housing primarily through its local plan which controls where housing growth can take place, and through planning policies which developers must adhere to. This includes our policy that developers of sites of 10 homes or more, must deliver 30 per cent of them as affordable homes. We then work with our local registered providers to secure this affordable housing.

The good news is that despite the pandemic, we have actually achieved a higher proportion of affordable homes due to partnership working with developers and registered providers including bringing forward 100 per cent affordable housing schemes, a rural exception scheme and additional purchases for shared ownership.

Out of the 840 new homes or conversions delivered in West Suffolk in 2020/21, 297 were classed as affordable homes giving a delivery rate of approximately 35 per cent.

One of the biggest success has been on one of the development phases at the new Marham Park estate in Bury St Edmunds where 37 per cent of the homes were delivered as affordable homes. These are now managed by Clarion Housing.

'Affordable Housing' includes affordable rent which is based on 80 per cent of market rent, social rent which is around 65 per cent of market rent, and shared ownership schemes. Of the 297 new affordable homes, 149 were classed as affordable rent, 53 as social rent, while 95 were made available under shared ownership schemes.

West Suffolk Council currently has 2,147 households on its housing register. This compares to 1,980 this time last year. Being on the housing register does not mean that a household doesn't already have a home or even an affordable home. What it does mean is that the household, whether it be a person living on their own, a couple or a family waiting to find suitable affordable housing for their needs within West Suffolk, whether through up or downsizing, or moving to a different location.

So affordable and social housing, managed through registered landlords, is crucial and while we are pleased to have secured more of these homes, we are not complacent, and recognise that more needs to be done, not just by West Suffolk Council, but all who are involved in housing delivery.

### **The Future**

The next chapter, which we are all about to write together, with partners, businesses and especially our communities is about the future of West Suffolk.

As I contemplate the meetings we held on Tuesday and Wednesday, I would like to repeat what I said at the first West Suffolk Council AGM, namely that no matter what political party you belong to you (and we all) are here to do the best for your communities.

The community champion role that you play in your ward and how we both serve and lead, is vital in delivering with and for our communities and partners, not only services, but our ambitions for a strong recovery and a prosperous future for West Suffolk.

To assist this, we have increased locality funds by £500 each to help every councillor make sure they can make a direct impact in their local areas. We have also strengthened the way we were already working through families and communities, reaching across borders both organisational and geographic.

I also hope we can meet before long either virtually, or when allowed, in person with groups of councillors from our various towns and localities so that together we can better understand and address any specific local issues and opportunities for West Suffolk as our diverse area recovers.

Something COVID-19 has perhaps highlighted is the strength, ingenuity, and flexibility of local councils to not only adapt, but get the job done and get it done well - and we have played a major, and frankly invaluable, role in actually delivering national and Government priorities.

Our focus will continue not only on our localities but the wider challenges and initiatives we will either have to adapt to or lead on in West Suffolk, the wider County and nationally.

This includes the well-being agenda – for example our ground-breaking hubs in Mildenhall and Western Way, our improved leisure centres, a new hospital, and continuing to work better with health partners. This is a massively important area that many of our services support - from our parks, planning, housing to families and communities – the list goes on!

Improving and protecting our unique environment and striving to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 remains a priority for us. Even during COVID we have made great strides in delivering a number of initiatives to help us reach our ambitions.

The Government is now looking nationally at how waste is collected and what is recycled, and the expected legislation may well have profound changes for local authorities and our communities.

We are reaching our targets for housing development and the shoots of recovery for our economy are clear here in West Suffolk. But we need to maintain our focus on encouraging economic growth through our emerging local plan and managing development for the benefit of our communities and businesses.

The elections have seen changes in the political landscape for our neighbours. West Suffolk is part of the Cambridge sub-region and share many of the same challenges and opportunities of our neighbours regarding housing, economy, transport, and environment, to name just some. I have written to the newly elected Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to arrange a meeting to ensure we continue to work together constructively.

In addition, like all public services we are still fighting for fairer funding – especially after the impact of COVID-19 and reviewing policies Government can and will look at in relation to how public services work best in the future. We will continue to lobby, especially around issues such as the Comprehensive Spending Review, and use our success and status as a still relatively new single West Suffolk Council to give weight to our arguments.

I know you are all up for this challenge. We have excellent officers and staff and a great Council behind us to help us lead and deliver as local councillors, championing our communities here in West Suffolk. I look forward to working with you all to build on the great work done already and write the best possible new chapter for West Suffolk.

With best wishes, John

**Cllr John Griffiths**  
**Leader of West Suffolk Council**