

Iken Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Thursday 17th August 2017 at Iken Village Hall

PRESENT

Loulou Cooke (Chairwoman), Norman Johnson (Vice Chairman), Councillors Hugh Waterer, John Hailes, Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett and Colin Chamberlain

In attendance:

Suffolk County Councillor Andrew Reid

Village Residents:

Annabel Chamberlain, Sir John and Lady Gieve, Jeremy Hinves, Penny Johnson, Lynette Morton, Jonathan and Audrey Power, Paul and Judy Shipman, David and Susan Spindler

APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillor Richard Mann who was away. The Parish Clerk Lorraine Lloyd was unable to attend due to a recent operation and all Councillors present indicated their desire to send her their best wishes in an appropriate form. Councillor Colin Chamberlain undertook to keep the minutes in her absence.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

All councillors have an interest in matters relating to the river wall

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A Revised Draft of the Minutes of the Meeting of the PC held on Thursday 18th May 2017 had been circulated to the Councillors before the Meeting and, there being no further comments, were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairwoman, Loulou Cooke.

PRESENTATION BY SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW REID

Suffolk County Councillor Andrew Reid is the elected member for the Wilford Division and therefore represents Iken. He produced the SCC Newsletter for July 2017 and began by outlining some of the issues which were of major concern to SCC. There is a debate about where EDF as the developer of Sizewell should locate the expected 2,400 or so workers expected to be housed in temporary campus accommodation. Councillors had been grappling with the need to make substantial savings which had reduced the budget by about half in the past seven years. The key budgets were £270m for social care, £81m for children in care, £23m for fire and rescue and £19m for highways. Under an obligation to balance the budget, the Council had been receiving substantially reduced direct grants from government and had needed to make up the shortfall from business and other rates. Councillor Colin Chamberlain asked in connection with the recycling initiative whether glass bottles might not be collected in the fortnightly recycling collection but Andrew Reid did not see the need for this in view of the number of local sites where glass could be recycled but he undertook to investigate the proportion of local authorities which collected glass in this way. Chairwoman Loulou Cooke raised the subject of the potholes and other defects in local lanes. Councillor Andrew Reid noted that maintenance was largely delegated to Kiers and there had been some recent discussions with them about the performance of their contract. He also admitted the online reporting system did not always work satisfactorily. It was explained that the Parish Clerk Lorraine Lloyd and Councillor Chamberlain had recently carried out an inspection of all potholes and road defects but had found that, after reporting some 20 problems online to SCC, that nine of them had been almost immediately closed in circumstances where it was doubtful any inspection had been carried out. Chairwoman Loulou Cooke drew attention to the fact that there is a very heavy usage of Iken's small country lanes particularly by heavy agricultural vehicles and machinery and tipper trucks with clay for the sea defences and that this heavy traffic inevitably broke up and damaged the edges of the roads. Verges and embankments were also identified as being damaged by the weight of traffic with the consequential spreading of sand across road surfaces. There was also concern expressed about the crossroads on the main Snape/Orford road where the street markings were still regarded as inadequate and three bad accidents there over a period of three months a year or so ago were noted. In view of the traffic it was questioned whether the roads should still be part of the Suffolk Cycle Route and frustration was expressed about the tendency of cyclists to ride two or more

abreast. Councillor Reid undertook to take up these issues with the SCC Safety Manager. In order to do so it would be useful if the concerns could be set out in a letter explaining the situation.

Action: Councillor Chamberlain to draft a letter to be sent by the Parish Clerk to Councillor Reid.

RIVER DEFENCES

Councillor Chamberlain gave an update on the AOEP and the river defence plan. It was explained that the AOEP had yet to appoint selling agents but when that was done it should then be able to take advice on which enabling developments in the Estuary would be the most viable and a decision could then be made about which sites might be taken forward for preliminary discussion with the planning authorities and the community. At present there were two offers on the table in Iken: the Village Hall site (now that SCDC appeared to be saying it would not necessarily rule out a site because it was below the 5m line) and Councillor Richard Mann's offer of a three-acre site near High Street. The Village Hall site might be augmented by a gift of adjacent land by John Hailes which might create a larger space to work with. Paul and Chairwoman Loulou Cooke were mulling over a possible additional site. Lynette Morton queried why there seemed to be so much delay. Councillor Hailes explained that it had been necessary for further modelling particularly to show what the impact of work in one place might have on another. Sir John and Lady Gieve expressed a concern about whether there was as much transparency as there should be and asked whether the plans would be brought back to the PC for scrutiny before submission to the planning authorities. Lady Gieve was concerned that there should be an opportunity to assess the plans as a whole saying that it was important to check the position not just in respect of Iken but also in relation to neighbouring parishes. It was not sufficient to look at each parish in isolation. Councillor Chamberlain sought to allay fears that the project was rolling ahead without sufficient accountability saying that the AOEP first needed to identify the viable projects and that the essence of the plan is to obtain community support so as the plans took shape there would be further consultation. Chairwoman Louise Cooke suggested she write to the AOEP chairman as a number of the village residents had expressed a desire for more clarity and transparency regarding enabling development sites. Councillor Waterer felt there was a need to press the Environment Agency to unclog the planning procedures. Louise Cooke mentioned that modelling was being done by the West Country Tidal Lagoon Consortium who are looking for compensatory wetland and mudflats on the east coast.

Councillor Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett noted that he had just flood proofed his home and he was happy to show the work to any interested villager. The work had been cheaper than he had anticipated, indeed no more than an annual insurance premium.

It was noted that the AOEP Public Meetings to launch the Funding Programme would take place at 6pm on 14th October 2017 (Orford Town Hall, chair Libby Purvis); 6pm on 21st October (Snape Village Hall, chair Paul Heiney); and 11am on 28th October (Aldeburgh Cinema – chair Nick Robinson). Details of the Meetings would be published in parish magazines (The Link) and elsewhere and the Parish Council undertook to post details of the meetings on the Iken website and noticeboard.

Action: The Chairwoman will write an appropriate letter to the Chairman of the AOEP after consultation with the Councillors. The Parish Council will publish details of the AOEP meetings on the website and noticeboard.

MR AND MRS RUTHERFORD'S OFFER

It was noted that an offer had been received from Mr and Mrs Rutherford for a three foot wide strip on the village hall site at the back of their garage. Councillor Chamberlain noted that for Iken PC to be in a position to sell any land it would first need to be registered and the right to sell would need to be checked with the Charity Commission as he thought there was no apparent power of sale in the 1950 Deed of Gift. The Councillors expressed themselves content in principle with selling a strip of land but it was clear that the Council was not in a position to agree any sale in the immediate future and that the proposal was something to be worked through once the future of the Village Hall had been worked out. In discussing Mr and Mrs Rutherford's Offer the Meeting passed a vote of thanks to them for their very successful fund – raising efforts on behalf of the flood defences by way of the recent Orford concert.

BDO AUDIT CLEARANCE

Councillor Chamberlain as the Responsible Financial Officer noted that the BDO audit had been successfully completed for 2016/17.

FUTURE OF THE TRUST FUND

Councillor Chamberlain noted that the trust fund was held for 'the deserving of Iken' and that if the fund were to be used for the river defences then a change of charitable object in the trust deed would be necessary and this would need to be discussed with the Charity Commission and may involve Court approval. Chairwoman Loulou Cooke suggested it would be worthwhile allowing for alternative charitable objects to the river defences in case this was expedient.

FOOTPATHS

Vice-Chairman Norman Johnson reported that he was in touch with David Last at SCDC and he was looking into possible uncertainty about the line of the footpaths behind his residence as a number of walkers had been found to be confused about the footpath rights. It is obviously important SCDC ensures the line of footpaths is as clear as possible on the ground with appropriate signage.

PUBLIC FORUM AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (1) Audrey Rutherford enquired about the asbestos position in relation to the Village Hall and Vice Chairman Johnson advised that the use of the hall was not dangerous but it would cost about £27,000 to demolish and that it was not necessary to use a specialist to undertake demolition. However, in any demolition it was important the roof was taken off in strips so that the asbestos was not released.
- (2) Annabel Chamberlain enquired about the flood problems in the road outside Iken Hall. It was noted that although work had been done to cut a soak-away through to the abutting field this had simply filled up again with sand, Vice-Chairman Johnson thought there was a problem in that the camber of the road was in the wrong direction which meant the water did not drain away.
- (3) Vice-Chairman Johnson noted that he would circulate to interested residents other than the Councillors a copy of the pre-planning application correspondence relating to the 5m level and whether it affects planning applications. He would also post it on the website.

Action: Pre-planning application letter to be circulated by Vice-Chairman Johnson to interested persons other than councillors.

- (4) Councillor Hughes-Hallett asked whether as a village we had ever set up a community helpline to enable elderly or frail residents to get help with collecting prescriptions and other similar tasks. It was thought sensible for Councillor Hughes-Hallett to give some thought to this and report back. It was noted that on prescriptions the Saxmundham Co-op operate a delivery service.

Action: Councillor Hughes-Hallett to report back with his thoughts on how such a scheme might work in Iken

- (5) Councillor Johnson noted that there might yet be hope for the two per cent of the population who cannot access broadband. Will Gibson has a project to try and include these people.
- (6) Chairwoman Loulou Cooke moved a vote of thanks to Councillor Waterer for kindly mowing the grass at the Village Hall site which had resulted in its pleasingly neat appearance for the Meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 5pm Friday 17th November. Going forward, other dates of meetings are 6pm Thursday 4th January and 5pm Friday 18th May.

CLOSE OF BUSINESS

With no further business to discuss the Meeting closed at 7.25pm