

**Iken Parish Council**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
held on Thursday 18 May 2017 at Iken Village Hall commencing at 6pm

**PRESENT**

Colin Chamberlain (Chairman) Loulou Cook (Vice Chairman) Councillors Richard Mann, Hugh Waterer, Norman Johnson, John Hailes

**In attendance:**

District Councillor Ray Herring  
Michael Bedford

**Village residents:**

Audrey Rutherford , Paul and Nina Davis, David and Susan Spindler, Lynette Morton, Penny Johnson and Annabel Chamberlain.

**APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Sir Tom Hughes-Hallett due to an emergency NHS meeting in London.

**DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

All councillors have an interest in matters concerning the river wall.

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting of the PC held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017 had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting and there had been no comments or objections to the content therein so were duly signed as correct by the Chairman.

**WRITTEN REPORT FROM DR THÉRÈSE COFFEY MP**

This report had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting and copies were available to read. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

**REPORT ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS SINCE MAY 2016**

There were six planning applications during the year

Snape Maltings - Improvements to existing flood defences - Ref: DC/16/3159/FUL, August 2016

Supported by Parish Council Approved by SCDC

Mr and Mrs R Hywel Evans - Variation of planning conditions C/13/1182 - Ref: DC/16/2546/VOC

Supported by Parish Council Approved by SCDC

Mr and Mrs Neville Howe - Ref: DC/15/4903/FUL, September 2016\_Iken Barns Complex

Supported by Parish Council Approved by SCDC

Mr and Mrs Patrick Cadzow - Ref: DC/16/3799/FUL, October 2016

Single storey rear extension and internal alterations at 32 Sandy Lane

Supported by Parish Council Approved by SCDC

Mr Ben Emmerson - Ref: DC/17/0417/VOC, January 2017

Variation of existing 2014 approved plans at Jumbo's Cottage

Opposed 4 to 2 by Parish Council Approved SCDC

Mr and Mrs Paul Davis - Ref: DC/17/1187/FUL, March 2017

Change of Use of Hill Farm Barn from holiday to residential use

Supported by Parish Council SCDC decision awaited

The Chairman ran through these planning applications. One of the unresolved applications had been filed on behalf of Mr and Mrs Davis who were present at the meeting. The Chairman asked Mr Davis if there had been any further development on the application and Mr Davis explained that they had received a response from planning officer which resulted in the application having to be withdrawn for the time being as the Planning Officer had refused it under Delegate of Powers. The Chairman pointed out that if there are objections to an application then the Planning Committee get a referral. There had been no objections. Mr Davis said that he had decided to withdraw for now in the hope that they can get a second chance.

Ray Herring explained that an Officer's decision is likely to be different to a Planning Office and there is a referral procedure which is not automatic. There has to be some good sound reasons to do it. The issue is that where there is holiday accommodation it can be fairly flexible, it helps the economy (tourism). Mr Davis replied that he doesn't deny that but he explained that last year there had only been six weeks of let so it was not economical or even break even. Ray Herring pointed out that the process needs real evidence over a period of time and it is unlikely a change of use to residential would be agreed at first application.

Colin Chamberlain asked how many changes of use from holiday to residential had there been over the past five years. Ray Herring said he didn't know. He explained that change of use from barn or business use to residential tends to be discouraged. He suggested that perhaps the type of holiday accommodation on offer by Mr & Mrs Davis should be looked at as to whether it is best for the area and wanted by holiday makers. Richard Mann queried the process and asked how the parish council should respond in order to support Mr & Mrs Davis. Ray Herring said planners like the parish councils to respond in case local issues get overlooked or missed. The response does not necessarily have to be as planners but just as local people. Ray said what they are looking for are things of substance relevant to policy and local plan. The better this can be related the better the result. Norman Johnson explained he tried to follow previous cases when deciding whether to support or not. Mr Davis discussed what had gone on to date. The planners have a history. Planners do want to retain holiday accommodation in rural areas as it is an important part of Suffolk Coastal heritage. Mr Davis thanked everyone for their support.

### **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

This report had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting and copies were available to read. A copy is filed with the Minutes.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Herring for his report which was fantastic and fully comprehensive. He asked if there was a link whereby people could go on the website to see this report.

Councillor Herring said that the move to the offices at Melton had gone very well. There was a surplus of furniture etc on the move. Agreement had been made to merge with Waveney. The two districts were similar but there were some challenges - different economies etc. Colin Chamberlain spoke of the Council tax increase and asked how much the new homes budget was driving decisions. Ray Herring responded that more building would incur more income from taxes. Business rate retention helps to pay for local services so if this increases there will be more funds available. Colin Chamberlain asked if developments below five meters would be allowed to claim for new homes bonus and asked if a converted barn to a new home would fall into that bracket. Ray said they would rather take council tax than small business rate retention. They would consider other applications for funds and thought that they might but would depend on funds available across the whole of his constituency.

Colin Chamberlain asked about parking meters. There were significant issues across Suffolk re parking. At the moment there is a net loss on parking.

Ray Herring outlined what would be happening and asked who could go to East Suffolk partnership forum in November.

Colin Chamberlain read out the headings of Rays report so that people could go online or request a copy of the report to get more information.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 .3.17**

The financial report had been circulated and Colin Chamberlain asked if anyone had any questions. Hugh Waterer asked why some of the money taken from charity had been transferred back into the account. Colin Chamberlain explained that, as responsible financial officer, he felt the money should not come out of the charitable funds as the expenditure it would have been used for was not compatible with the charities objectives in their current form. He thought it should be discussed at the next meeting as there is a process for changing charitable objectives. There was a discussion about this fund. Norman Johnson proposed and Richard Mann seconded a resolution that the annual governance statement and the accounts be approved and the same were unanimously approved.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW**

The Chairman read out his Chairman's Report in the following terms:

*"First, some thanks.* I would like to express my very great thanks to our new Parish Clerk, Lorraine Lloyd, who has been a huge help to me with the preparation of the planning and financial reports as well as all the help she has given taking minutes and efficiently issuing notices for meetings and distributing the post addressed to the PC. My thanks to her also in handling the statutory notice of vacancy and the subsequent co-option advertisement. I was very pleased how smoothly this all went. The Standing Orders we adopted last year have helped enormously in guiding us in our administration.

*Secondly, changes on the PC.* The only change in the membership in the year was Councillor Sir Thomas Hughes-Hallett who we welcome. He can't be here tonight due to an emergency board meeting but I am sure we are all hoping that, amongst other things, he will put some of his immense fund-raising skills into what has to be done here in Iken on the river walls. Tom was the only person to put himself forward during the six week advertisement period under our standing rules – it is a mark of the working of our committee that there are now two other candidates who have expressed interest in joining the committee when opportunity arises.

*On the river defences.* As we all know the upgrading of Iken's river defences is the main issue facing this village at present. For the estuary as a whole the plan is that half the £10-£12m funding comes from the landowners – and half from the rest of us including about £1.3m from government. Our three principal landowners are to be congratulated on accepting substantially increased IDB rates which will be used to service the proposed £3m loan from the Public Loans Board which will be the initial core funding for the AOEP's upgrade of the river walls. That is however only the start. It is planned the other £2m-£3m will come from the gains made on gifts of land made for enabling development. There are 42km of river walls altogether including 6.5km in the Iken flood cell of which 4.5km of Iken wall are of the highest priority, in other words 4.5km of bad walls in Iken. With 15% of the river defences this means that Iken landowners need to contribute planning gains of about half a million pounds to meet their fair share. That is at least two good sites. I don't know where these will come from but a priority is to carry on the search for them in the next year.

In October, the fund-raising will begin to raise the £4 or £5m needed from householders and others in the area (as well as government funds). Iken householders will be asked to give generously as Iken is greatly threatened by a failure of river defences. The way I think of it is that Iken houses already stand at a significant discount in value because of their flood risks whether direct or indirect. Paying generously towards the fund-raising is simply a first but important step towards the recovery of their proper value.

*On Iken as a Community.* One becomes very conscious living in Iken about how the activities of one person affect others. Sometimes matters are unacknowledged. The residents of Iken who live on roads have seen the exponential growth of farm vehicle traffic over the past 10 years – many of the tractors moving without trailers to outgoing farms. The roadside banks have been steadily mauled as many have recently commented. The residents have been incredibly patient with the farmers as they accept the farms must move their produce – there are some 250 agricultural manoeuvres a day through Iken in high summer, some going at excessive speeds I might add. It would be great if this very great patience were more recognised. What I have seen as chairman is just how important it is for residents to talk openly and listen to their neighbours about their plans and activities and make the effort to get them inside.

*The Village Hall.* The village hall needs to be disposed of. It is derated on the basis that it is unoccupied. But it could cost the PC hundreds of pounds each year in rates. We are paying £257.90 this year to insure it and that's on condition someone checks it every month – for which thank you John. It can't be allowed to just simply deteriorate year by year – inevitably there will be repair expenses or liabilities too great for our resources. There has to be a plan. If we can't utilise it for enabling development – or swap it for other land where enabling development is carried out, then it should be sold as it is. By this time next year I urge the PC to come to a decision on this. Finally, I will shortly be passing on the Chair to Loulou and I wish her all the best and offer her any help she needs. Thank you."

Loulou Cooke suggested that Colin stay on as our flood defence liaison officer, Richard Mann seconded this. Colin said that he is happy to do this.

A figure quoted in Colin's report was queried and Colin explained it.

There had been power cuts, a few seconds at a time. Remedial work was being done.

Audrey Rutherford advised the meeting that a concert was arranged to be held in St Bartholomew's Church, Orford to raise funds. Half would go to St Elizabeth's Hospice and the other half to the river defence funds.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

Loulou Cooke took over as Chairman. The matter of the Village hall was brought forward in view of the fact that Michael Bedford had come along to offer his advice on the matter.

Norman Johnson took the floor and explained: A year ago a council grant was obtained for an asbestos report to be made. Although the village hall is in a safe condition it has to be kept on an asbestos register. The condition of the grant was that we did an options appraisal – demolishing, doing it up, sale, possible development with profit to river walls etc. The Alde and Ore Partnership were originally interested but then moved on because it is below five metres.

Michael Bedford addressed the meeting. Colin Chamberlain asked if we sold it or rented it would we have to pay rates. Michael Bedford thought that the tenant would have to take over rates. It is currently exempt from rates.

Certain work would need to be done to bring it up to standard. What about for potential to sell to raise money. If planning could be obtained it immediately puts the value up. An individual would struggle to get planning here. An architect has explored getting planning in flood areas and it would be difficult unless the site was razed. He thought there may be people out there who may think it worth giving it a go. Various options were suggested. It was asked if it was possible to give a value of the land. Michael Bedford said that it depended on what planning is obtained. One good house would raise a sum of £4-5 hundred thousand up to 700,000. There would be the cost of demolition. Asbestos is most expensive. Options were discussed. Say if somebody asked to use it for storage for example as a short term measure. Would council give a grant to employ somebody to look at the planning aspect? If anybody actually worked in the village hall then there would be a need to bring the building up to good health and safety standards. It was generally thought that the building is beyond anything other than pulling down. Planning permission is required to pull it down. Ray Herring thought someone should talk to the planners to get a better idea. It was asked at what level in the planning department and Ray Herring suggested the Development Management team leader. Thanks were extended to Michael Bedford. He said he is happy to answer questions. Michael was asked what he would do. He answered that he would risk gambling £500-£1000 pounds to employ an architect.

Actions:

Norman Johnson to get quotes for demolition and somebody should volunteer to talk to council.  
Norman to get in touch with Planning Department and ask to meet at village hall.

### **IKEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Election of new Vice Chairman – Norman Johnson was proposed by Richard Mann seconded by Colin Chamberlain.

Loulou Cook thought that she would stand down after a year in view of the fact that there were two new people showing an interest in coming onto the Council, Neville Howe and Alan Hutson.

### **CHURCH GRASS MOWING**

Colin Chamberlain asked if £300 could be paid for grass cutting. It was suggested that the grass could be cut by volunteers and there followed a discussion as to how this could work. Loulou to liaise with John Hailles and try and work out a plan. It was proposed Colin Chamberlain and seconded Richard Mann that we pay for cutting once more.

### **REMOVAL OF POST BOX IN SANDY LANE**

Norman Johnson had done some research work on it and one post box had mysteriously disappeared. Another one was taken from Blaxhall at the same time.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Potholes were discussed. Lorraine explained that Suffolk Highways had a reporting website and explained how this worked. Colin and Lorraine to work out where the potholes were and make the reports.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING** Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 6pm

With no further business to discuss the meeting finished at 8.06pm.