

## Stansfield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20th January 2016

**Councillors present: Sarah Douglas Pennant (Chairman), Jane Ballard and Robert Dennis**

**Also present: Mrs J Ince (clerk) County Councillor Mary Evans and District Councillor Peter Stevens**

### 1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Trevor Lang and Sarah Hopkins

### 2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda.

### 3. Report from Borough Councillor Peter Stevens

Peter Stevens spoke about:

- The proposal for a West Suffolk Operational Hub and the current consultation
- The charge for emptying brown bins which has been set at £40.00 starting in April 2016
- There is likely to be a 1.5% increase in the Council Tax
- His locality budget. He has offered £300 towards the cost of refurbishing the phone box and is happy to give money for any Queen's 90th birthday celebrations

### 4. Report from County Councillor Mary Evans

Mary Evans spoke about:

- The letter to Parish Councils from Suffolk Constabulary about the possibility of funding 6 PCSO's
- The suggestion to hold group meetings of parish council chairmen.
- The current fire service consultation. None of the changes will affect Stansfield.
- The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.
- The cabinet for broadband is due to go live in February but will only be able to serve properties within a 1 mile radius. Smaller cabinets should be installed at a later date to provide faster broadband to the rest of the village.
- There is now a scheme where the County Council will give a voucher worth £300 to help fund the purchase and installation of a satellite connection in areas where the broadband speed is below 2 megabits.
- Suffolk County Council is likely to increase their element of the Council Tax by 2% as agreed by the Government.

### 5. Police issues

There were no local police issues which the Parish Council wished to report.

The Parish Council has received a letter from Suffolk Constabulary about changes to the Police. The Suffolk Policing Review was announced on 4th December. Key changes include:

- Streamlined processes for the investigation of crime.
- A redefined remit for Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) and a reduction in their number from 29 to 18, with a focus on addressing community concerns.
- Three revised policing areas in the East, West and South.
- Nine policing 'locality' areas, combining emergency response, investigations, SNTs, volunteers and the Special Constabulary.
- A revised workforce mix removing 68 PCSO posts from the organisation.
- The closure of a number of police station front counters, leaving three public access points in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

The full report can be found on the Suffolk Constabulary website at [www.suffolk.police.uk](http://www.suffolk.police.uk)

### 6. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18th November 2015

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

### 7. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting

There are 5 outstanding councillor actions.

### 8. Finance

#### a) Approval of payments and signing of the Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following electronic payments would be approved:

- Acting Returning Officer West Suffolk Constituency - charge for an uncontested election - LGA 1972, s111 - **£21.34**
  - J P Ince, expenses, LGA 1972, s111 - **£13.70**
- Jane Ballard and Robert Dennis signed the Schedule of Payments and Sarah Douglas Pennant countersigned it.

**b) Approval of the record of online payments made since the last meeting**

It was resolved that the record of online payments would be approved. Jane Ballard then signed it.

**c) Signatory to sign checklist of internal controls**

Jane Ballard completed the checklist of internal controls.

**d) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting**

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

**e) Approval of the final budget for 2016/17 and signing of the Parish Estimates form**

It was resolved that the budget would be approved. As a result of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's cut in the Parish Revenue Support Grant and the Local Council Tax Support Grant, the amount received from the Borough Council has reduced by a further £233 in addition to the £233 reduction last year. This decrease has had a serious impact on the Parish Council's budget. In order to minimise the impact on the amount householders pay as part of their Council Tax bills, the Parish Council has looked at ways to reduce its spending whilst maintaining a healthy reserve.

It was resolved that the precept request would be £4,611 an increase of 2.53% which equates to £1.28 per band D property per annum. The Chairman and clerk then signed the Parish Estimates form.

**f) Changes to the audit regime in 2016/17**

From 2017 smaller authorities with a turnover of less than £25,000 will be exempt from having to submit an annual financial return, but will still need to have an auditor appointed in case there are questions from electors to be resolved.

From the start of the 2017/18 parish councils can choose to have an auditor appointed to them by a new 'sector-led body (SLB)' or they can decide to procure their own. Those smaller authorities who wish to participate in the SLB do not need to do anything as all smaller authorities are automatically opted in to the new body and will have an auditor procured for them.

A small fee will be charged for this to cover the whole five year period and will be payable before the start of the new audit arrangements in April 2017. The one-off SLB fee is estimated to be less than £100, however this may be subject to change as the SLB is set up.

All authorities who wish to opt out must make their own arrangements with auditors, which will include but is not limited to the following:

- establishing an Auditor Panel;
- following a statutory appointment process set out in regulations;
- appointing an auditor by 31 December 2016;
- providing the SLB with the contact details of your auditor.

It was resolved that Stansfield Parish Council would not opt out of the Sector Led Body scheme.

**9. Highways/rights of way issues/Transport issues****a) Speed survey**

It was resolved that the clerk would contact Mary Evans to request a speed survey.

**b) Dragon's Teeth**

It was resolved that the clerk would contact Mary Evans about the dragon's teeth markings at both entrances to the village which have been worn away. The road surface underneath also needs repairing as this section was not repaired at the same time as the rest of the road.

**11. Village 'Clean for the Queen' spring clean**

It was resolved that a spring clean would be organised on Saturday 6th March at 10am starting at the village hall. Details will be included in the newsletter and on the website. The clerk was asked to request 10 sets of equipment from SEBC including hoops.

**12. Visit to the waste recycling facility at Gt Blakenham on 12th February**

It was resolved that the visit would be cancelled due to low numbers as there is a minimum number for visits.

**13. Dates of parish council meetings from May 2016 - March 2017**

It was resolved that dates would be finalised at the next meeting as the Council is looking into the possibility of changing the day. The next meeting will be held on Monday 21st March if the hall is free.

**14. Correspondence:****a) Letter from Suffolk Police re match funded PCSOs**

The Council received an e-mail from Suffolk Constabulary on 18th December notify them that due to budget cuts 68 PCSO posts will be removed in 2016/17 and offering parish councils an opportunity to fund (or part-fund) 6 match funded PCSO's.

It was resolved that no funds would be made available as the budget for 2016/17 has already been set and resources are already limited due to cuts in grants from St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

- b) **Letter from West Suffolk re consultation on West Suffolk Operational Hub for managing waste**  
Forest Heath District, St Edmundsbury Borough, and Suffolk County councils have put forward a proposal to locate waste services in West Suffolk on one site. The two main sites which have been considered are Tut Hill near Risby and Hollow Road Farm near Fornham St Martin, though Hollow Road Farm is seen as the optimal site for delivering the proposed WSOH. The consultation, which is asking residents for their views, ends on 19th February.

It was resolved that a response would be submitted stating a preference for option five which is to keep the existing household waste recycling centre (HWRC) at Rougham Hill and co-locate the waste transfer facility and depot on a new site.

- c) **Letter from Chief Fire Officer re fire service consultation**  
The Parish Council has received a letter from Chief Fire Officer, Mark Hardingham, about proposed changes to the fire service. Although Wickhambrook Fire Station will not be affected, changes are proposed in Bury St Edmunds. There are three fire engines there at present, one crewed by full-time fire fighters and two crewed by on-call fire fighters. The proposal is to remove one on-call crewed fire engine resulting in a saving of £72,000 per annum.

It was resolved that no response would be submitted.

- d) **Invitation to a public listening event, run by the Care Quality Commission at the Apex on Thursday 3rd March to share experiences of the services and care provided by run by West Suffolk Hospital - for information only.**

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.**

Signed ..... (Chairman) Dated .....