

**Minutes of Playford’s Annual Parish Meeting held via Zoom at
6.30pm on Wednesday, 5th May 2021**

Present: Mrs Joan Metcalfe - Chairman
Mr Stephen Hicks - Vice-chairman
Mr Ted Herrington – Councillor
Mr Keith Carson - Councillor
Mr Martin Hill – Councillor
Mr Colin Hedgley – District Councillor (arrived 7.20pm)

In attendance:
Mrs Marian Hedgley - Clerk
Mr Ben Evans – prospective new councillor, Playford PC

Also present:
Mr Eric Metcalfe
Mrs Veronica Bunbury
Mrs Sally Herrington
Mr James Jary
Mrs Jos Saunders
Mrs Sarah Potter
Mr Ben Wale
Rev Gary Jones

The meeting started at 6.30pm. Joan Metcalfe welcomed everyone and asked if anyone would like to take the chair. Ted Herrington proposed that Joan should take the chair, and this was unanimously agreed.

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. To approve the Minutes from the Meeting held on 8th May 2019

Ted Herrington proposed acceptance of the minutes and this was seconded by Martin Hill – these were duly signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes:

None

4. Chairman’s Report

Joan’s report was circulated in advance to all councillors and to those who had requested the link to the meeting, together with reports from the District and County councillors.

In brief, Joan explained that it had not been possible to hold an Annual Parish Meeting last year because of lockdown and in fact ordinary PC meetings did not resume until August and November 2020 when we were able to hold them in the Church after which we were able to hold remote meetings via Zoom from January 2021.

Signed

One of the most significant happenings last year was quashing plans for the proposed Northern Ipswich Bypass put forward to ease traffic passing through Ipswich area.

Regrettably, two councillors, Tim Llewellyn and Mike Brewer had left the council within the last two years as they had both moved out of the village.

Seven planning applications had been passed during the period, four of which the PC had supported but they had objected to the other three. The Neighbourhood Plan is hoped to be finalised this year after a lot of hard work but has been held up by most of the East Suffolk departments working from home due to Covid restrictions.

The parish Precept has been raised to £9500 for this year to meet increased costs of parish maintenance, mainly due to various drainage issues.

For details of the above in full please see report appended to these minutes.

5. County Councillors’ report

Co Cllr Mary Evans was unable to attend – she is not standing at the County Elections tomorrow so this is her final report.

In brief, Mary’s report stated that the response to the Covid crisis within the local communities has been inspirational with local businesses and voluntary helpers stepping up care for vulnerable residents. Foster carers and social workers have also gone to extraordinary lengths to see to children in care homes.

Suffolk County Council was among the first councils to declare a Climate Emergency, pledging to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Council’s budget is £600m for the coming year, 75% of which is used for caring for people, vulnerable residents and children in care. The winter of 2020-21 has been a dreadful year for potholes, being one of the wettest on record and the winter gritters were out regularly from the autumn onwards. SCC is spending £1m on pothole repairs. It is also doubling its budget for Highways and drainage

Please see full report appended to these minutes.

6. District Councillor’s report

District Cllr Colin Hedgley was unable to attend the meeting until later but his report was circulated in advance.

Briefly, Colin outlined his year as Chairman of the newly formed East Suffolk Council from May 2019 which was extended until October 2020 as the Council was unable to meet in person to hand over to his successor. During that time he carried out many civic duties and met many amazing people who were working hard for the benefit of the county, mostly without any financial reward for themselves.

Signed

Each of the 55 East Suffolk district councillors donated £2000 from their Enabling Communities Budget to the newly created Hardship Fund which was then used to help out residents who were suffering through the backlash of Covid in various ways and not covered by other grants.

Simplified parking tariffs are now in place, more litter bins have been distributed in open spaces, work on a new seafront café is nearing completion. The appeal against ESC granting planning permission for the former council offices in Melton has been dismissed and it is hoped that this site can now be developed at last.

The Economic Development and Regeneration team are pursuing their long-term economic growth programmes to ensure a good recovery from the Covid downturn and specific business support schemes are being developed to enable new businesses to start up. Over 17000 separate payments (totalling £35.9m) have been granted to businesses struggling due to Covid-related issues and a further £9.4m of Covid business grant funding has been allocated to ESC (covering the last 6 weeks up to 31st March 2021) which is being allocated to all eligible businesses. The hospitality sector is receiving up to £9K per business with the new business grants.

Regular Covid updates have been received throughout the period and the Environmental Services dept has sent advisory letters out explaining the new food and safety rules to get businesses up and running safely again. Spot checks will be made from time to time to ensure compliance.

Cllr Tony Fryatt tony.fryatt@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
Cllr Colin Hedgley colin.hedgley@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Please see full report appended to these minutes.

7. Rev Gary Jones report

Gary Jones introduced himself as the new vicar of Playford – he was appointed early last year but this is his first Annual Parish Meeting. He spoke of the challenging times we have all had in the village during the Covid pandemic but that there were lots of positives as it had brought out the best in people. Church services have been kept going where possible (albeit with social distancing in place) and an outdoor carol service was achieved in the churchyard just before Christmas. It is hoped that the annual Clarkson Service will go ahead as planned on 11th July this year and Ben Wale, the local Lightwave leader is planning a big Harvest Festival this autumn.

8. Open Forum

Footpath/Cyclists

Veronica Bunbury stated that the use of local footpaths had increased dramatically since the beginning of lockdown and safety of pedestrians was

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constantly being challenged by aggressive cyclists on certain footpaths. The “No Right to Cycle” notices which had been placed at the beginning of almost every footpath are being ignored as they are too small and in some cases obscured by foliage or gates left open. Cyclists can be rude and unhelpful when challenged although many are quite considerate and stand to one side to allow walkers to pass in narrow places. Technically they are not breaking the law but the situation cannot be regulated and being inconsiderate to pedestrians is not acceptable. Could some sort of barrier be erected to hinder them? Or larger signs placed asking cyclists to dismount or slow down when meeting pedestrians? And could Cycling Clubs be asked to encourage a culture of politeness to pedestrians?

Increased safety measures at Footpath/ Railway crossing near Lux Farm.

Jos Saunders was concerned about the impact of these new measures as she understood that loud sirens would be used to alert walkers to oncoming trains and felt that these would disrupt wildlife, birds and local residents over a wide area. JM considered they were necessary to ensure safety at the crossing and that probably they had been brought in as a compromise against closing the crossings permanently (as had been proposed by Network Rail a couple of years ago but had been objected to strongly by the public). Footpaths are ancient rights of way and to change their route would incur many objections from the public and associations such as Suffolk Ramblers, not to mention a very lengthy legal process. Increased traffic on the railway line is inevitable if Sizewell C goes ahead and if we want to keep the footpath open, then we must accept increased safety measures. It was suggested that the actual increase in noise in decibels should be ascertained before making any judgement.

Contact for 5-a-side football coach.

Ben Wale asked if anyone had a contact name for anyone coaching 5-a-side. The clerk said she would get back to him.

Questions on Cllr Colin Hedgley’s report.

Colin joined the meeting at 7.20pm to answer any questions on his report: He stated that he has funds available from this year’s budget for new projects and to let him have details of anything required.

TH asked whether he could fund new signs to go up on C324 to alleviate traffic problems – Colin replied it was doubtful this would be sanctioned as this is a Highways’ issue and should be addressed by SCC.

9. AOB – none

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

Signed
Chairman

A full copy of these minutes and Chairman’s and County and District Councillors’ reports can be viewed on the website: www.playford.org.uk