

Shimpling Parish Council
Minutes of Meeting of the Council
Monday 8th March 2021, 7:30pm via ZOOM remote conference.

Present:

Councillors: Liz Brunwin (Chair), Katie Haselhurst, Mike Atkins, Colin Johnston, Gerry Shrimpton, Nathalie Brown

County Councillor: Richard Kemp **District Councillor:** Cllr Stephen Plumb, Cllr Michael Holt

Clerk: Natasha Byford

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Rush sent his apologies.

2. **Declarations of Members Interest(s):**
 - a) **To receive disclosure of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest(s) including gifts of hospitality in excess of £25:** Cllr Haselhurst disclosed an interest on Items 15b and 15c as she is a near neighbour and has a family connection to the builder. Cllr Atkins and Chair Brunwin also disclosed that they were near neighbours of the building in Item 15b and 15c and also of The Bush Public House in Item 12. Cllr Brown also disclosed a pecuniary interest on Items 15b and 15c as it is her property. It was decided that all members should stay and discuss the planning application in Item 15b and 15c except Cllr Brown, who will be excluded, as it was her property and all members should stay in the meeting to discuss Item 12 The Bush.
 - b) **To consider requests for dispensation for the agenda item(s) under discussion:** None received

Public Participation session

Five members of the public (MOP) attended. Nothing raised.

3. **Approval of minutes of the previous meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021 were approved.
The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2021 were approved.
Action: Clerk to publish these on the website and Social Media.

4. **Chair's report:**

The Chair reported since the last meeting, she has dealt with correspondence and issues regarding the playground, footpaths, The Bush and the worrying number of deer being killed on the A134. The Chair met with Clerk and past Clerk to go through the agenda for tonight's meeting. The Chair also attended the SALC Area Forum via Zoom. At that meeting, it was interesting to note that many of Parish Councils were complaining about the lack of response from Babergh on planning issues. It was also felt that the planning system is biased towards the developers because of the pressure on Babergh to fulfil their quota of housing supply. Parish Councils generally felt that their opinions were not being taken into consideration as part of the planning process. SALC are trying to take this forward with Babergh and our MP, James Cartlidge. SALC also reported that there is still no update on whether remote meetings would be allowed to continue after the 7th May. Although the Shimpling

Support WhatsApp group is still available for residents to call on help, we have received very few requests for help. At the SALC meeting it was evident that quite a few councils were planning events to bring people together after we have been released from restrictions and to help the lonely.

The Chair also noted that the Parish Council has changed the date of the Annual General Meeting and Annual Assembly of The Parish to Wednesday 5th May 2021, so that these can be held remotely via Zoom.

5. District Councillors report: Cllr Stephen Plumb and Cllr Michael Holt gave the following updates:

- An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk

Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins through existing updates for councillors, or via the Suffolk County Council website. An update on the vaccine rollout can be found on the SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website.

- Community testing

1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 do not have symptoms and may be unwittingly spreading the virus to other people without knowing. To tackle this, Suffolk has introduced community testing (also known as lateral flow testing or rapid testing) for those who are unable to work from home. A number of community testing centres have recently opened across Babergh, including sites in Sudbury, Nayland and Holbrook. To find out more, or to make an appointment go to the Suffolk County Council website.

- Councils pledge to provide further financial support for struggling households

Thousands of households across Babergh will be eligible for a reduction in their council tax bill after councillors approved further support for residents facing financial difficulties due to Covid-19.

- Covid support grants for businesses

There are several business support grants available which cover different local and national lockdown periods. For businesses mandated to close (including those in retail, leisure and hospitality) that have applied and received a lockdown grant since November 2020, our plan is to automatically pay additional grants following pre-payment checks.

However, for businesses that may be eligible but have not heard from us, or are yet to apply for any grants, we are encouraging them to find out more and to submit an application form as soon as possible. Further information about all the covid business support grants can be found on our grant funding schemes webpage

Cllr Plumb entered the meeting at 7:35pm

- Babergh budgets for financial stability and sustainability

Councillors have agreed Babergh District Council's budget for 2021/22 – delivering financial stability post-Covid while still delivering the council's commitment to climate change.

- CIFCO portfolio nears completion

Property investment company CIFCO Capital Ltd is set to increase the £1.5m it has already ploughed back into council services so far this year – with the recent purchase of a Coventry trade park.

- Babergh parking changes agreed for October at the earliest

Babergh District Council will continue to subsidise an hour's free parking to support its high streets, with changes to council car park charges expected to come into effect later this year.

- Green light for new taxi fares

Babergh's Cabinet recently approved new taxi fares in the district, following wider consultation with cabbies, which will see the basic day time rate increase by 20p.

- Sale of Chilton Woods

The £35m sale of a significant part of the development site at Chilton Woods is now complete, with Taylor Wimpey taking immediate ownership to progress plans for a new community. Proposals will bring much-needed housing as well as future employment opportunities, facilities and infrastructure for Sudbury.

- Councils confirm support for Freeport East

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have confirmed their support for Freeport East, following the bid being formally submitted to Government by Hutchinson Ports.

- Everyone will benefit from Census 2021

Households across Babergh will be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring. The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every ten years since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

- An extra £3m for warmer, greener Suffolk homes

More Suffolk residents, including those in Babergh, are set to benefit from Government Green Homes Grants thanks to a further successful bid for £3m funding by a Suffolk consortium of local authorities.

- Councils help combat holiday hunger

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have continued to fund a joint initiative offering food and activities for families in need during the school holidays.

- Plug in Suffolk

Plug in Suffolk is now providing grants for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at non-profit locations such as community centres, parish council car parks and village halls. Visit Green Suffolk's website or contact Suffolk County Council's environment strategy officer Peter Frost to find out more about the funding.

- The Postbox Project

Many of our residents will have experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness since the Covid pandemic began. To combat this we've partnered with The Forge Church and Suffolk County Council to launch The Postbox Project. Our aim is to connect people across Suffolk, using letter writing to build new friendships. We are currently recruiting volunteers to write letters, so if you can spare a little time, please let us know. Alternatively if you're aware of someone who is experiencing loneliness and would benefit from a letter, you can refer them directly to the project.

- Postponement of the Women's Tour

The Women's Tour, the international cycle race originally scheduled to finish in Suffolk on 12 June 2021, has been postponed due to COVID-19. Organisers, Sweetspot Group, have requested alternate race dates of Monday 4 to Saturday 9 October from the sport's governing body. Once new dates are confirmed, we will begin our community activity and work with local schools and businesses to promote the tour coming to our district.

- The Sustainable Development Fund

The Sustainable Development Fund is available for community and conservation organisations (or individuals) to support projects for the conservation and enhancement of Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley. The AONB is seeking applications from local projects that benefit the public, are innovative, socially inclusive, sustainable, and involve partnership working. For information and advice about the fund please visit the website or contact AONB grants officer Oka Last.

6. County Councillors report: Cllr Richard Kemp attended for the first part of the meeting and give the following update:

- COVID-19 UPDATE - Summary

Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

- Suffolk County Council Budget

The Suffolk County Council Budget has now been presented to Scrutiny and to Cabinet, and was voted through by Full Council on February 11th. Key points include:

- A council tax rise of 3.99% (1.99% basic council tax and 2% Social Care Precept), representing an increase of £53.55 for a Band D property, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22.

- A council tax shortfall of £7.9m less than expected, to be met by using reserves.
- Planned spending is £597.9m, 7.4% more than 2021-21.
- £15.3m of spending to address ongoing COVID-19 costs.
- No proposed reductions in council services or personnel.

- LDGI Group Budget Amendment and Group Leaders speech

The LDGI Group submitted a Budget Amendment to Full Council on February 11th alongside the administration's Budget. The amendment would have authorised the use of the full 3% social care precept to avoid impacting SCC's reserves and generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household. The extra income would have provided funding for a wider service offer for Suffolk residents, including a new officer for the flooding team to unlock more government funding, and the re-enablement of concessionary bus passes on community transport. The amendment was unfortunately not passed.

- Cllr Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Leader of the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group and proposer of the motion, gave the following speech:

"After 13 years of cuts to local government, which has starved this council of government grant funding, this council is no fit state for the financial and environmental challenge it faces. Raising council tax is the least progressive form of taxation, but we are left with no choice. This Government cut taxes for the rich and then cut funding to local councils to pay for it. As leader of the largest opposition group I can firmly say we, the Greens, Lib Dems, and Independents, had no part of this plan to tax the poor harder and give tax breaks to the rich. Everyone in this chamber today is being forced into a position by the government where we have no option but to vote for raising council tax."

"Our amendment would have taken the full amount of precept allowed for social care, meaning that money is not being taken from general council funding. If we don't take the extra 1% then we lose almost three and a half million for social care this year and every year into the future. That money will have to be made up by reducing services elsewhere."

- Streets Guide Consultation

Suffolk County Council is currently running a consultation on a new Streets Guide, which will assist designing streets for new residential developments especially by promoting walking and cycling. The consultation closed at 5pm on 10th February 2021. Parish Councils can submit responses at the following link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>

County Council Leader responds to the latest lockdown easing announcement

- The Leader of Suffolk County Council has responded to the latest lockdown easing announcement from the Prime Minister. Cllr Matthew Hicks, Suffolk County Council's leader and chair of the Suffolk Outbreak Engagement Board, said:

"I think that most people will feel that this lockdown has been harder than any of the previous restrictions. Many more people now know someone who's been affected by COVID-19, the weather has meant more time indoors and we're missing our loved ones more than ever. In short, we are tired and ready for a brighter future. The end really is in sight now. With the rapidly accelerating vaccination programme, testing readily available and the number of cases steadily decreasing, the Prime Minister has been able to outline the road map towards social restrictions ending.

"Throughout this lockdown, the people of Suffolk have stuck to the rules and with the end goal clearly in mind. It is this commitment to doing the right thing that has protected vulnerable people, the NHS and, ultimately, saved lives. Now we are so close, Suffolk needs you to continue following the guidance, get tested and vaccinated when it is your turn. We have worked together to slow the spread of COVID and must now stay the course to overcome it."

- Suffolk & Norfolk County Council submit joint bid for £6m flood funding

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils have submitted a joint bid to the £200 fund for Flood and Coastal Resilience, requesting £6m to invest in flood protection schemes across both counties. The proposed projects would also capture water for reuse. If the bid is successful town and parish councils will be encouraged to get involved through measures like permeable paving, water butts and 'rain gardens' that can cope with occasional flooding. These projects would be in place by 2027 if the bid is approved.

- LDGI Group opposes Government's last-minute approach to local authority grants

Suffolk County Council will receive £27m for highways repairs, maintenance and drainage in 2021-22, a reduction in from £31m the previous year. This has necessitated the use of £2m of reserves to top up the grant. In the view of my Group, these cuts in Government funding make it impossible to plan long-term for road maintenance and repair. Due to the uncertainty as to whether this grant would materialise at all, some vital work has already been postponed.

Cllr Stringer, speaking on behalf of the LDGI Group, gave the following quote:

"It's a bit like someone telling you that they're going to punch you twice in the face and then expecting you to be grateful if they only punch you once."

- LDGI Group submits response to Post-16 Travel Policy consultation

The LDGI Group has submitted a joint response to Suffolk County Council's consultation on the Post-16 Transport Policy, which manages transport to schools and education for young people after the age of 16. The LDGI Group's views included:

- Support for the expansion of the post-16 travel eligibility criteria for sixth form students and adult learners aged 25 and under with EHC plans, reflecting the change in age range for compulsory school attendance.
- Support for keeping prices lower for SEND students.
- Use of buses and trains for school transport must be supported. The needs of students and the numbers currently forced to use taxis or private cars to reach their schools must be taken into

account when considering public transport. Students should be steered towards buses first, and the school transport service should support our local bus network in maintaining services to rural areas.

- The Travel Training Scheme must be better funded, so that it can expand and promote its services.

- Consultation on proposed A12 improvements from A14 Seven Hills to A1152 Woods Lane
Suffolk County Council is currently consulting on proposed improvements to the A12 between A14 junction at 'Seven Hills' and A1152 at Woods Lane, with the aim of increasing highway capacity in the area and preventing future congestion. Government predictions suggest that traffic will increase by 25% in this area by 2040.

The improvements will include traffic lights on every roundabout but Seckford, and have an estimated cost of £60m. The lights would monitor congestion and use 'intelligent flow' to adapt to changing levels of traffic.

Cllr Caroline Page, speaking on behalf of the LDGI Group, gave the following quote:

"I am anxious about the number of roundabouts with traffic lights. This is the trunk road all the way to Lowestoft, are they going to make life more simple or easier for anyone doing this journey? It's going to cause people to stop and start. There are lots of areas on the A12 that are narrow and in need of improvement, so I would really question why it is so highly invested in the stretch here. These proposals are also at odds with the climate emergency declared by the Council. We are supposed to be reducing road traffic, but we seem to be enabling it here".

The consultation is open from 9 February to 19 March 2021, and can be commented upon at the link below:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/a12-improvements/>

7. Crime matters:

The new county wide newsletter available was dated February 2021 and is available online:

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>

The Clerk reported that the February newsletter was circulated to Councillors along with the papers for the crime update. There was nothing Shimpling specific but to note that Sudbury had two of the initial Coronavirus vaccine sites, the volunteers are doing wonderfully and they are managing around 400 vaccines per day! There were higher than usual number of thefts from motor vehicles around Acton, so police warned to double check your vehicles. A man from the Ipswich area was arrested and charged for this! There is a 'report something' button on the Constabulary website home page which is good to use instead of the 101 phone number if it isn't a crime in progress as the phone line demands are extremely high.

The Chair also reported that catalyst converters were taken from cars in Long Melford. Similarly, Cllr Kemp reported that 'Nottingham Knockers' were doing the rounds in Long Melford.

8. Village Hall:

Village Hall Committee – No update from the Village Hall Committee. It was reported that the Chair was forwarding on any communications from ACRE with regards to reopening Village Halls to the Village Hall Committee Chair. The elections are to be held in the Village Hall. Cllr Johnston noted that he had resigned from the Village Hall Committee. There were no volunteers to join the Village Hall Committee alongside Cllr Shrimpton.

9. Recycling:

Improvements to the recycling bank area were considered to improve the appearance from the road. Chair Brunwin suggested that Willow fence panels should be used to cover the view of the recycling banks and to add some hardcore to level out the layby. It was noted that this was previously discussed as a project some years ago. It was agreed by members that this could be a good project and that the Chair could make enquiries about who owned the land (it was noted that the Parish Council have mown this land since around 1985), and whether we would require consent from Highways and to get some costings on this work.

Action: Chair Brunwin to research pursuing this project.

10. Responsible Finance Officer's Finance Report:

- 10a)** The Clerk gave a finance report, details of which were circulated to members prior to the meeting, and stated which invoices (please see below) needed to be paid.

Leaving balances as follows:

- Treasures Account £3,952.76
- Business Account £27,671.93
- Including CIL of £1,689.64
- Earmarked Reserves of £4,750.00
- General Reserves of £4,623.00
- Including COVID Emergency Fund of £17,112.13

Budget review – The Clerk supplied an up-to-date budget review for members. Spending is on track and believed we will come in on budget. The Clerk explained the budget report and invited questions.

- 10b)** The Clerk noted that the PC had received recycling credit for £159.92 and another instalment for the Covid Grant fund has just come in for £2,096.00.

- 10c)** To acknowledge payments made outside the meeting

- **S. Smith – Shimpling Newsletter** **£450.00**
LGA 1972 s142 (newsletters)

10d) The following accounts were approved for payment:

- **Clerk's Net salary after Tax (N. Byford)** **£383.41**
- **HMRC Tax payment (N. Byford)** **£95.80**
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)
- **Admin and Expenses payment (N. Byford)** **£29.49**
LGA 1972 s 112 (Emp of Staff)
- **SALC Clerk Training** **£180.00**
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)
- **SALC Payroll Service** **£27.00**
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)
- **SALC Audit Training** **£24.00**
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)

The above payment schedule was approved by members.

10e) CIL and Footpath:

It was discovered that we had budgeted £1,000 from the CIL fund to go into the Village Hall Maintenance cost line for the 2021/22 budget. Members previously discussed using this money for the works on Footpath.7 but unfortunately this isn't possible. Members agreed to instead take this money from the Covid Grant fund to fund the Footpath.7 project.

11. Clerks Report: A full copy of the Clerk's report was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The following matters were considered for resolution:

Summary of Progress: During the period (Jan – March), the Clerk worked 11.25 hours over the given time frame of 4 hours per week (4 hours under), but this did include the 6 weeks Clerk training and additional training on year end accounts and taking 2 hours annual leave. The Clerk's record of work was reviewed and accepted.

12. The Bush:

The Chair reported that Babergh Planning had served a Planning Contravention Notice on the owner of the Bush requiring detailed information, plans and evidence of the current layout, use and occupation of all rooms within the buildings on the land, including any internal/external alterations carried out within the last 4 years.

A new scheme (community ownership fund) announced in the February Budget which matches funding for community purchases was discussed but it was acknowledged that the Pub was not up for sale. It was suggested that perhaps a MoP might be happy to contact the owner of The Bush to inform him of this fund should he be considering the sale of The Bush.

13. Quiet Lanes Project:

An update was given regarding the Quiet Lanes project, Gents Lane has been nominated as a Quiet Lane. If this progresses there will be a consultation which includes talking to neighbouring residents of the lane and leafleting residences in Shimpling. Cllr Johnston has been in touch with the Quiet Lanes Department regarding the next steps of this and looking at the potential positioning of the Quiet Lanes sign. Cllr Johnston updated members as to what the next steps are with this project. It was agreed to progress with this and that we would receive an update at the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Johnston to continue with enquiries

14. Planning:

The Chair gave an update on planning applications:

Planning Decisions:

- 14a)** DC/20/05017 – Malting Farm, The Street, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 4HS – Change of use of cartlodge from Holiday let to from 1no dwelling – Granted.

Planning Applications:

Cllr Brown left the meeting at 8:25pm.

- 14b)** DC/21/00374 - Primrose Cottage, The Street, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 4HS – Application for Listed Building Consent. Erection of single-storey link extension between Primrose Cottage and Church Room to facilitate residential use of Church Room ancillary to Primrose Cottage. Members discussed the planning application and the letter from Heritage regarding the application and it was resolved to support this application. It was noted that it would be nice to see a welcomed attempt to bring a disused building back into use.

Action: Clerk to write letter to planning to support this application.

- 14c)** DC/20/05950 - Primrose Cottage, The Street, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP29 4HS – Listed Building Consent – Repairs to Church Room roof and the adjoining lean to roof. Installation of new insulating membrane and battens, re-using pan tiles and slates, replacing those damaged. Replacement barge boards, soffits and fascias and painted in black barn paint. Members discussed the planning application and resolved to support this application.

Action: Clerk to write letter to planning to support this application.

Cllr Brown re-entered the meeting at 8:32pm.

Cllr Johnston also flagged up a concern over the Coal House, a listed building, as this was not on the agenda it was agreed that it would be put on the agenda for the next meeting on the 17th May 2021.

15. Covid19 Emergency Fund

To receive applications from the emergencies fund.

- Cllr Brown proposed a celebration after Covid restrictions are lifted in the summer. The proposed date for this was Sunday 27th June 2021. This would be a day for Shimpling residents to get together and celebrate, welcome back those who have been isolating and meet any new residents. This would take place at the Village Hall and outside space. Cllr Brown asked for up to £500 from the Covid Grant fund for this and members were all in agreement.

16. Footpath7:

Update regarding Footpath 7 which runs from The Street round to Gents Lane. It was noted that this work will go ahead when the ground is firmer in the warmer weather. Cllr Shrimpton agreed to oversee the day-to-day work on this project to ensure works go smoothly and that the materials are stored well on Mrs Ross' land. It was suggested that the works would take 7-10 days to complete. The Chair thanked Cllr Johnston for all his work on this project.

Action: Clerk to contact footpaths and check any requirements prior to work and to inform Mrs Ross when dates are agreed with the contractor.

17. Playground:

The Chair gave an update on the playground, Ben Hutchinson had started the repair work on the playground. Caloo will inspect the ariel runway on the 18th March 2021.

18. Correspondence Received:

- None received

19. Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the council

It was brought to the Council's attention that there are currently trees overhanging the road, which are causing poor visibility and are becoming dangerous. This was reported two weeks ago by Chair Brunwin, but no response had yet been received. The Chair will take further photographs and will contact Highways again.

Public Participation

The Chair opened to the floor to MOPs again and nothing else was raised.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 8:45pm.