

Shimpling Parish Council
Minutes of Meeting of the Council
Monday 11th May 2020, 7.30pm via ZOOM remote conference.

Present:

Councillors: Katie Haselhurst (Chair), Mike Atkins, Colin Johnston Gerry Shrimpton, Nathalie Brown and Ken Rush,

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

Clerk: Stuart Palmer

1. **Apologies for absence:**, Liz Brunwin, apologies received and accepted
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:** Cllrs Haselhurst, Shrimpton, Atkins, Brown and Johnson made personal non-pecuniary interest disclosures regarding planning application at 13d in that they lived in the near vicinity of the development. As it would be impractical for every councillor who lived in the village to exit the meeting when planning applications were discussed it was proposed and resolved to continue with all present during the item and to note the interests.
 - b. **To consider requests for dispensation for the agenda item(s) under discussion:** None disclosed

Public Participation session

Thirteen members of the public (MOP) attended. One member of the public raised issues relating to planning application at 13d: He made 4 points: 1. The access on the plan had changed from the approved outline plan to the reserved matters plan. 2. Levels on the drawing were inconsistent. The developer should be made to re-survey. 3. There are huge and dangerous trip hazards in the design of the access and could harm foot traffic as it enters the green to avoid the road. 4. The visibility splay has been measured out wrong and will not work according to the granted plan. Another member of the public raised a question regarding the planning application on 13d of the fence and gate at the back of the newly proposed properties and if this would give the option for more to be built in future.

The chair thanked the contributors and said that the points raised would be picked up under the item on the agenda.

3. **Remote Meeting Procedures:** The clerk set out the changes in regulations to allow the Parish Council to meet remotely under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels Regulations 2020. The PC had agreed to use the platform ZOOM and bought an annual subscription to use it. This meeting was hosted on it. The PC resolved to adopt the regulations.

3a. **Approval of minutes of the previous meeting:** - Members agreed that minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2020 were a true and accurate record. The minutes were duly approved by Chair of the meeting.

4. **Chair's report:** The Chair being absent the Clerk read out the following report:
The Chair noted that such a lot had changed in the World since the Parish Council had met in March. Although the Parish Council had discussed a coronavirus strategy at that meeting, no one could have foreseen how much our lives would be affected and that our next meeting would be via video link. The Parish Council has chosen Zoom to facilitate their meetings and Chair and Clerk attended a virtual course in April on this.

With the help of the Deputy Chair, the Shimpling WhatsApp Group was set up soon after the March meeting primarily to help support those who were unable to leave their homes to buy food and medication. Within no time, over 30 people had signed up to help which was heartening. She had also been very encouraged by the number of offers of help and fund raising from the community from delivery of fruit and vegetable boxes to raising funds for the NHS by 'dancing in the your front garden' events every Sunday afternoon.

The Chair and Deputy Chair have been in contact with the Landlady of The Bush to offer support and to ensure that she is aware of any government help may be on offer. We are all very mindful that pubs and restaurants are

likely to be the last businesses to be reopened after the lockdown so the Chair hoped that the community will support the business as soon as they possibly could.

Since lockdown, the Parish Council has been sending out weekly paper leaflets giving information and again offering support in any form with contact numbers. This ensured that those who do not access to computers do not feel isolated. Of course none of this would be possible without the help of Sarah Smith who copies the leaflets and Jayne Schofield and her delivery team and the Chair extended her thanks to all of them.

The Parish Council were surprised that Babergh District Council was still going ahead with the processing of planning applications during this lockdown period. The Council challenged the Planning Department about this on the grounds of accessibility and pointed out that this issue could be seen to be advantageous to developers, but the response received was that this was the Government's express wish. Because of our leaflet system, we feel comfortable that we have managed to alert everyone about the planning applications and given them an opportunity to attend the virtual meeting or contact via the usual means of communications.

The village supported the VE Day with great style and enthusiasm with lots of Union Jacks and bunting giving villagers who are isolated another chance to feel part of their community.

In addition to this the PC are also individually working through the village to check there is no-one on their own without a neighbour or relatives in contact.

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

- A briefing note was published by the District council on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and is available to the clerk.
- Business Grants are available to support business rate payers through the pandemic. All who are eligible to apply.
- The chair confirmed that the PC had made a successful bid and been granted £10,000. See agenda 14.
- Garden bin collection has re-started
- Other community grants are available

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

- Many SCC meetings cancelled and some being held remotely.
- All efforts focussed on COVID19 response.
- Tribe App and phone line launched for volunteers to help those isolated and in need of help.
- All schools have partially closed but free school meals provision continues
- Free bus pass use extended to before 9.30
- SCC have donated £60,000 to support food bank
- SCC have submitted a bid for funds to improve bus services
- The review of school transport policy implementation highlighted 19 failings
- Opt in for free school bus transport deadline is 31/5/2020
- 97% of students receive a school place at one of their preferred Secondary School places.
- SCC win funding bid to improve A12 east of Ipswich.
- SCC investing £9.8M converting their street lights to LED. Potential for a return on investment through saved energy consumption after 5.5 years. Carbon emissions expected to drop by 60-80%.
- EDF Energy delay their application for Sizewell C development consent order.

7. **Crime matters;** The new county wide newsletter available was dated April and is available online:

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

There is an opportunity to receive crime information via Police Connect. Go to www.suffolk.police.uk/services/police-connect and register.

The Clerk read out some highlights but they did not impact on Shimpling. Cllr Rush stated that he was hearing that rural thefts are rife including thefts from sheds and outbuildings. The parishes meeting with the Community Engagement Officer in March had to be cancelled. Cllr Holt said he would re-arrange as soon as we are able to meet in public again.

8. **Public Transport:** The Chair stated that the action from last meeting to contact Chambers to encourage them not to reduce the service during the crisis had been suspended given the circumstances after the meeting. On reflection it was deemed as inappropriate at the time and will be reviewed later.

9. Village Hall

- **Village Hall Committee** – There had been no meeting since the last PC meeting. The VHC are exploring options for hand dryers that may come to a future meeting. The VHC had suffered some financial losses due to closing to bookings during the crisis and also may be subject a future grant bid.

10. Responsible Finance Officer's Finance Report:

10a) The Clerk/RFO gave the following update to the meeting with balances as follows:

Total Income for last financial year was £11,120.13 including the precept, £9519.00, receipts from recycling, VAT refund and interest. The Parish Council made payments to a total of £8650.56. Funds of £11,062.47 were carried forward this year as follows:

Treasurers Account:	£3,972.97
Business Account:	£7089.50
Total Reserves:	£11,062.47

Of course, that includes £1689.64 of ringfenced CIL money leaving the PC actual operational reserves of **£9372.83**, an increase from £8592.90 at the start of the year. This is a better position than was budgeted for. There was an underspend of around £869 on this year's budget. This is largely due to efficiencies such as a £700 saving on insurance by combining policies and being able to use £720 of CIL money to repair the playground rather than use the £500 budgeted as well as spending only £200 on VH maintenance instead of the budgeted £1000 due to a local provider doing the work at cost. The PC also received £560 from recycling revenue, which is not included in the budget as it is a completely unknown income. This does mean that we will be able to return the excess to general reserves that the Clerk had warned were worryingly low.

I have transferred £3300.00 into the deposit account as soon as this financial year opened on 1st April. This will bring general reserves including CIL money to £10389.50 and the Current Account before this quarter spending to £672.97.

We have already allocated much of these reserves to things such as renewing the laptop and village hall lease at earlier meetings but I have revised the list for consideration and agreement.

1) Maintenance contingency fund for Village Hall	£2000
2) New Laptop for council in 2021/22	£750
3) General repair/maintenance of e.g play equipment etc	£1000
4) Lease in 2021 renewal	£1000
Total earmarked reserves	£4750
Total Ringfenced CIL fund	£1689
Total General reserves	£4623
<u>Total Reserves</u>	<u>£11062</u>

Clearly, we are in a much healthier position than we were 2 years ago. We can now operate in a crisis, for example, if Babergh were unable to forward our precept payment this month due to their lockdown.

There was no borrowing last year. No tenancies entered into. The lease on the Village Hall runs to 2024. There were no CIL receipts made to the council.-

Budget for 2021/21: A Budget was approved in November 2019 of £9743.00 The precept was set to raise an income of £9743.00. Total income for year estimated at £9743.00 meaning there should be no need to further draw from reserves.

Internal Controls. All finance practices follow the Financial Regulations adopted by the council and published on our website. They are managed by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and supervised by the members of the council. This year the RFO has set up a new accounting system called Scribe. It is web portal based and designed and adapted to suit Parish Councils. Both the Chair and Vice Chair have remote access to the system. The RFO also successfully moved the PC to online banking. Keeping the 2 signatories' safety and security, online payments are now set up for the majority of suppliers by the RFO and authorised for payment by the Chair or Vice Chair. This is a much more secure process and allows suppliers to be paid faster.

Audit: The Audit for last year commenced on 4th May, once again, Suffolk Association of Local Councils is to be appointed. The Audit process has had to be adapted this year due to the COVID19 pandemic. PFK Littlejohn LLP have been appointed to carry out the external audit of small local councils.

The Clerk offered to take questions on finances but there were none. The PC resolved to sign off the end of year finances as presented to the meeting

10b) The Annual Governance of Accounts Report (AGAR) was presented to the meeting and it was resolved to sign it off as authorised and ready for Audit. Wet signatures are still required on some of these documents so this will be arranged by the Clerk.

10c) The Clerk presented a return on the annual spending. A total of £1292.65 was spent on Community Infrastructure leaving reserves of £1689.64

10d) Covered in above report and opening balances as of 1st April as above

10e) To acknowledge payments made outside meeting – No payments made

10f) The following accounts were approved for payment:

• Clerk's net salary after Tax	£416.95
• HMRC Tax payment	£104.20
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)	
• Admin and Expenses payment	£95.04
LGA 1972 s 112 (Emp of Staff)	
• SALC Payroll Charges	£27.00
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)	
• SALC Annual subscription	£186.20
LGA 1972 s 111 (ancillary Powers)	
Zoom video conference annual subscription	£71.94

The above payment schedule was approved by members.

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 this period (March to May) I have worked in excess of given time frame of 4hrs per week with 17 hours over allocation. This is mainly due to extra duty required for COVID19 response and preparing the audit. The Clerk's time sheet was authorised and signed off.

12. Community Assets:

The Chair updated the meeting that the application has gone in and been acknowledged by the District Council and it is also known that the owner and landlord of the Bush Inn have been contacted about the application by BDC.

13. Planning:

The Clerk gave an update on planning applications:

Planning Decisions

Shimpling PC Minutes 11/05/2020

- a) DC/20/00619 The Brindles, Aveley Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HB – Approved Planning Applications:
- b) DC/20/01463 - Barn At, Midway Farm, Bury Road, Shimpling Bury St Edmunds Suffolk – Application for a Barn conversion – This was previously supported by the PC. The PC were unable to meet prior to the deadline but responded that there were no issues with the application.
- c) DC/20/01711 - Trustrams, Old Rectory Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HQ – application for single storey rear extn. Members had no reservations about this straightforward application and resolved to support it.

Action: Clerk to send a letter of support to BDC

- d) DC/20/01664 - Land South Of The Street, Shimpling, Suffolk – Reserved Matters application on the approved plan for two bungalows.

Land South of The Street: DC/20/01664

One councillor raised several issues on this item. The following is a summary of the main elements:-

- Outline planning, had already been granted in February 2019. This proposal was on Reserved Matters, namely:- appearance, scale, layout and landscaping.
- Concerns about the viability of the proposal being able to achieve a visibility splay that meets Highways safety standards, remains.
- The destruction of the AVRA in front of the land in the applicant's ownership is a major concern
- In appearance the 2 proposed dwellings are 'anywhere' residences and need to accord more directly with the design principles alluded to in the 'Suffolk Guide for Residential Areas'
- In scale, much is made of the 'single storey' nature of the buildings to fit with some of the existing buildings in the immediate vicinity. What is missing is a clear statement on height. It is feared that they may well be very tall and over dominant. They must be proportionate and blend in with the immediate built environment.
- The layout with one at right angles to the other seems appropriate. There should, however, be changes in layout to accommodate better views from the AVRA to the landscape beyond and to provide more space between the building on plot 2 and Tolcarne.
- The landscaping is key to the integration of the development in the immediate and wider environment. There are contradictions and ambiguities in the applicant's documents across the Outline and Reserved Matters stages. The landscaping drawing provided shows what the trees and hedging, planted in 2020/21 will look like in 40 years time. This is simply not acceptable, A shorter time-frame document needs to drawn-up.
- To have any credibility, the soft landscaping plan needs to be accompanied by a management plan to include covenants, restrictions and a Section 106 agreement.
- The hard landscaping plan exceeds to a car-dominant environment with the hard surfaces devoted to an engineered surface across the AVRA, parking and turning areas and garages. There is no mention in the plan of walking and cycling and sustainable modes of transport.
- The AVRA ceases to be a historic open space for use by all and is further defaced by raised bullnose kerbing, a newly excavated track for a drainage pipe and a binstore.

Members agreed that the development must be part of the landscape and part of the village scene. While there are some elements that can be supported there is much that needs to be amended and in particular there needs to be greater sensitivity to the status and nature of the AVRA as an important open space with a designation and protections within Babergh's current policies.

There were concerns expressed by members of the public present. Attention was drawn to raised surfaces caused by the engineering works on the AVRA while there was disbelief that a visibility splay had been achieved. One councillor responded that despite writing directly to Highways and including the letter with the planning documents at the Outline stage there had been no reply. A member of the public was concerned about the gate at the rear of the development into the rest of the field and there was speculation that this left the field open to further development; the 'knock-on' effect of this would be a widening of the access roadway and further destruction of the AVRA. Over time the AVRA is likely to be seen as part of the development and no longer a public asset.

Members resolved to write to the BDC and object to the reserved matters details as above and suggest the above improvements.

Action: Clerk to send a letter of objection and improvement suggestions to BDC

e) **Joint Local Plan**

One member updated that there had been no movement since the last meeting. The Clerk had written to BDC and got no response. He chased the response up last week to no avail.

14. Covid19 Response

- a) The Chair's report set out details of the response to the pandemic including the delivery of regular leaflets to the village with updated support options. The PC resolved to adopt the leaflets as part of the PC's record of the response during the crisis
- b) The PC had been successful in a business grant bid available during the pandemic. The support grant awarded a sum of £10,000. It was proposed to deal with this COVID19 Emergencies Grant in line with an MOU prepared for members. The grant would be held by the PC and accounted and audited in line with all other money but be 'ringfenced' for this emergency for the time being. Groups such as the VHC could apply to be reimbursed for losses due to having to close to bookings. Members agreed to adopt the MOU by a majority.

15. Textile Bank

The Clerk asked for the previous action to apply for this to be carried over to next meeting as time and budget had prevented this action. This was agreed.

16. Correspondence Received: One email re planning dealt with at 13d.

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

Nothing raised

Public Participation

The Chair opened up the meeting for public participation again. One member set out the ways and reasons that public could refer to if they wanted to object to planning applications as set out in BDC correspondence.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9. 45 pm.