

Semer Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held at Tudor House on Wednesday 9th January 2018 at 7pm.

In attendance:

Richard Keens (Chairman) and Robert Thorogood, Trevor Mitchell (Clerk).

Apologies - Jackie Barraclough, Claire Hood and Granville Bendall

The minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2017 were read and approved.

1. Planning Application – Highlands, Ash Street - Installing Rooflights /Velux windows for a loft conversion. (The Parish Council have no objection to this application)
2. Planning Application - Change of use from an agricultural building to a dwelling house – Barn at land at Ash Street – This application has been approved by Babergh Council and the Parish Council's views have been ignored. Following a meeting earlier today with a number of local residents the Clerk has written to Babergh Planning department for an explanation of their decision and to arrange a site meeting. Their decision appears to contravene planning legislation.
3. Speeding in Ash Street - The clerk has discussed this with Nedging / Naughton and Whatfield Parish Councils. Nedging have recently extended the speed limit to Wallow Lane and Whatfield have just installed a vehicle activated sign which they share with Monks Eleigh. The cost of the sign was £4k. As a first step, following a recent accident in Ash Street where a car overturned, the Clerk has formally written to Suffolk Highways to ask for an extension to the 30mph speed limit. (To Naughton Road at the top of the hill in Ash Street and to include Semer Road past Crouch Farm)
4. Babergh DC proposal to merge with Mid-Suffolk – Following the resignation of the Council Chairman the new Chairman has promised a referendum on their merger proposals.
5. The appointment of a Data Protection Officer – We still await guidance from SALC on who can be appointed to this role and whether they will be offering this service. (It cannot be the Parish Clerk or a Councillor)
6. The future of Semer Parish Council – Following the meeting of 17th November the Clerk has discussed the various options with Babergh DC, SALC and Chelsworth PC (who operate as a Parish Meeting rather than a Parish Council). A brief summary is below:
 - A Parish Meeting Chairman is not in law a legal entity and so cannot own property. If Semer Parish Council was to dissolved and opt for this form of governance then the Church Meadow and Workhouse Graveyard would need to be re-registered to a new body at the Land Registry.
 - The Parish Meeting Chairman is still required to register under the Data Protection Act and all other legislation is appropriate. Chelsworth's Chairman deals with all correspondence and e-mails but the property they own, website etc is dealt with by other individuals in the village.
 - A governance review has to be carried out by Babergh to increase the number of Councillors from five to seven.

In view of the above it was decided that the Council would remain as is and an advert would be placed with SALC for a new Salaried Clerk to be appointed from 1st April 2018 on the present Clerk's retirement.

7. Precept for 2018-19 – The Clerk produced a budget for the year. The employment of a new Clerk, Data Protection legislation and the over-spend for the last two years will add £2K of additional costs. It was agreed that the precept be increased to £3.5K.

8. The Undermining of part of Overgang Road – This was reported on the Suffolk County Council website by a resident more than 12 months ago. Cones and Road signs were put in place by the Highways Department but there has been no further action. The Clerk has written to Highways enclosing photographs and asking for an update.

There was no other correspondence to discuss and no other business.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

The next meeting will be held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 11th April at 7pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....