

Semer Parish Council & Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held at Semer Village Hall on Wednesday 11th April 2018.

In attendance:

Richard Keens (Chairman), Robert Thorogood, Jackie Barraclough, Trevor Mitchell and Hannah Clarke-Keens (Clerk).

Apologies - Granville Bendall

The Chairman introduced Hannah Clarke-Keens as the new Parish Clerk, and thanked Trevor Mitchell for all of his hard work, dedication and input during his time as Parish Clerk.

The Chairman informed the council that Clare Hood has resigned from Semer Parish Council with immediate effect. It was agreed that Trevor Mitchell would take her seat on the council until re-election next year in 2019.

The minutes of the meeting of 9th January 2018 were read and approved.

1. The council were informed of the purchase of new PC and software via a grant of £500 from SALC. The total price came to £580 and will be available to use by the clerk and council when required.
2. Planning Application – Change of use from an Agricultural Building to dwelling House – Barn on land at Ash Street. There have been several meetings at the village hall with a number of residents in attendance. The Parish council issued court proceedings against Babergh District Council following their decision to grant permission for this development under class Q of the planning act and having consulted Planning Barrister Mark Westmoreland-Smith Babergh District Council's legal team have agreed that their decision was unlawful. They will pay all the Parish Legal fees associated with the case. As of Wednesday 11th April 2018, an update regarding the unlawful planning application was available to view on the Babergh District Council website.
3. Extension of 30mph Speed Limit in Ash Street to Crouch Farm and Nedging Road – Robert Lindsay has advised that that he is unable to get approval for this from Suffolk CC Highways Department. Currently the road doesn't meet the criteria for the speed limit to be extended, so unfortunately, we are unable to pursue this further for the time being. The council agreed to re-visit this issue at a later date.
4. Overgang Road – Overhanging hedge which requires cutting and dangerous drop on the opposite side is becoming very dangerous. Trevor and Richard have looked at the problem, as yet there has still been no action taken even though the issue was raised by Robert Lindsey to Suffolk County Council. There are cones and arrow signs at the top of Union Hill warning drivers. The job is listed on their website and action will be taken but no time frame has been provided as yet.
5. Annual Litter Pick – The council will consider participating in this annual event next year prior to Spring.
6. Better Broadband – BT Openreach has been in the area laying cables, however the work isn't yet finished and no update has been received as to when the service will be available.
7. New Website – Suffolk Community Action have moved everyone onto the latest version of the Silverstripe Software, making the website more mobile phone friendly and providing more functionality. Trevor Mitchell has made some alterations to the layout and improving the image. The council members viewed the website during the meeting. It was discussed that the Village Hall Committee may want to use the website to advertise bookings and events. The Clerk also receives

useful updates from Google Analytics informing us of how many visitors the website has received.

8. New online Councillors Interest Form – Trevor advised the council of the new online form. It was discussed that we are heading down the electronic route and that paper forms are being phased out. It is therefore important that all council members have access to the internet and email.
9. New Annual Parish accounts and reporting structure – The forms have been received by email to be submitted by 11th June 2018.
10. Appointment of Data Protection Office – Semer Parish Council has signed up with the Information Commissioners Office, Hannah Clarke-Keens (Parish Clerk) is the named representative for the organisation (Semer Parish Council). It was agreed that this was the most practical route to take unless our requirements for Data Protection should change as per new guidelines.
11. Babergh DC Merge with Mid-Suffolk – The merge has been put on hold until next year.
12. Barclays Bank Church Meadow Account – Another letter has been written and sent by Richard this week via recorded delivery and we await their response.
13. Precept for 2018 - there have been no enquiries as to the precept increase.
14. The Suffolk Walking festival 2018 – Information is available via the website www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk
15. Explore possibility of grant for Semer Mere - Works need to be carried out at the Mere. Trevor also raised the possibility of purchasing a bench for the Meadow. The council will look into available grants and purchase costs.
16. Neighbourhood Plans – Letter received from James Cartlidge for a meeting in Hadleigh Guildhall on 20th April. Trevor and Hannah to attend and find out more on the matter.

Any Other Business:

Road Closure - Watsons Hill will be closed on 14th October 2018 from 10.30am to 12.15pm for a Cycle Club Sudbury event. The cycle club are in the process of obtaining a Special Events Order from Suffolk County Council.

Protection for the Brett Valley – Following the recent planning application dispute with the barn on land at Ash Street, it was discussed whether the hamlet of Semer and its neighbouring villages would meet the criteria to become a protected area. It was agreed that Hannah would look into the process through Natural England and that Trevor would speak with James Buckle to find out what he knows re. conservation for Semer due to the work he has done with restoring woodland etc.

Available Grants for gate/security and path maintenance - The council agreed that some form of gate/security would be desirable for the path leading through church meadow to the church, especially now that there is water and electricity available on site. The trees also are in need of some maintenance, and it was noted that the hired toilet at the church gate is a bit of an eye sore.

The next meeting will be held on 25th July 2018 at 7pm at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....