BRANDESTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Minute of the meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 11th January 2021 via Zoom video call due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Present: *Councillors Aitchison, Baker, Fletcher, Locke, Mitson-Woods (Chair), Summers and Williams. Also present County Councillor West, East Suffolk Councillor Cook and Clerk Catherine Bacon.*

10/20-21/1 Welcome from the Chairman
Chairman Cllr Mitson-Woods welcomed Councillors, SC Councillor Paul West and East Suffolk Councillor Cook.

10/20-21/2 There were no Apologies of Absence.

9/20-21/3 There were no Declarations of Interest.

10/20-21/4 There were no villagers for the Public Forum

10/20-21/5 It was resolved that the Chairman should sign the Minute of the Meeting held on 14th December 2020 as a true and accurate record. *(Circulated and on website)*

10/20-21/6 County Cllr West announced that SCC is to bring forward a scheme using Automatic Numberplate Recognition (ANPR) in conjunction with the police to assist in reducing speeding, particularly in rural areas. Details are being discussed and will be introduced modestly initially to see how well it works.

SCC is also undertaking a laptop loan scheme to those with digital and/or rural isolation. The scheme is available across all ages. County Cllr West will provide more information as he receives it over the next few weeks.

SCC will be finalising its budget for 2021/22 in February prior to finalisation of council tax calculations.

10/20-21/7 East Suffolk Councillor Cook stated that with the increasing number of Covid-19 cases he has now recommenced weekly bulletins. The key points from this week's report are as follows:
Latest national information on coronavirus: https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus
NHS advice: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
Local, East Suffolk-specific information: https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/covid-19

The Suffolk Communications Cell, which includes representation from East Suffolk, has led on the delivery of a web resource which aims to provide clear, up to date information for stakeholders and residents. www.suffolk.gov.uk/covidvaccinations

The Home But Not Alone phone line continues to be active. Funding secured through work to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) group during the November lockdown has led to the purchase of 30 additional Grandpads, topping up the Covid-19 Community Fund (£25,000) and the Bounce Back Fund (£25,000).

The emergence of the more contagious variant of Covid -19 will affect the activities of the Environmental Protection team. As a general rule the team will not be undertaking visits to premises for any purpose. This will have an effect on proactive inspections and reactive visits for all purposes

including water sampling, nuisance monitoring visits, licence and permit inspections and many other site-visits involving entry to premises. They will be exploring ways of undertaking these activities remotely. The team had begun to make some headway in tackling the backlog off work caused by the first lockdown which led to 15% to 20% increase in reactive work from for example, noise complaints, bonfire nuisance complaints, fly tipping etc. However, they have not reached the stage yet of turning work away, since there is traditionally a seasonal lull in reactive work at this time of the year.

The Chancellor announced further support for businesses as we entered the new national lockdown. In addition to the current Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) and the Additional Restrictions Grant (discretionary funding aimed at those businesses without a rateable value) £4.6bn is being made available via Closed Business Lockdown Payment. This is aimed at retail, hospitality and leisure businesses and provides a one-off payment of up to £9k dependent on the businesses RV. There is also a further £500m being made available to top up the ARG scheme. As soon as the details of these new schemes are made available ESC will go live and promote these new funding streams in addition to the existing grants.

East Suffolk Cllr Cook also raised the fact that ESC will proceed with a 0% rise its council tax, aiming to help alleviate pressure on rise. He also reminded cllrs of the Crime Commission survey (previously circulated). East Suffolk Cllr Cook also highlighted that the amount of money received from the government will be shared with Towns and Parishes. Of the £300k received, £110k will be shared, resulting in an additional £21 being received by Brandeston.

10/20-21/8 Financial Matters

a) The RFO reported the PC account had been reconciled and the current balance is £3122.12 (of which £90 is 100+ prize money).
b) The RFO reported the 100+ account has been reconciled and the current balance is £71.31.
c) The Chairman reminded the Cllrs that the parish council had authorised an extra hour per week from April 2020. The Chairman informed Cllrs that the clerk had omitted to inform payroll of the change and therefore there was £366.21 (1 hour per week for 39 weeks April - December 2020) back pay due. **It was resolved to pay the Clerk back pay to be added to the January payslip.**

10/20-21/9 The budget *(circulated and on website)* was agreed.

10/20-21/10 The Chairman began by reminding the Cllrs that until six years ago, the clerk's position had been voluntary with only expenses reimbursed. Since then, the role has been a salaried role to comply with the legal requirement for a Parish Council to appoint a Proper Officer. The current budgetary proposal brings the salary in line with minimum recommendations from the National Association of Local Councils. This change has led to the Council needing to precept extra year on year to reach this compliance.

The RFO talked through the budget sheet to set the Precept for 2021-22 *(circulated and on website)*. With these natural increases across the board ESC have submitted a 0% change on their share in order to help reduce the burden on residents during the financially difficult times created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The budget proposed by the Parish Council would see the Parish share increase rather than remain as a 0% change. Concerns were raised by Cllrs that the precept should be raised whilst residents may be feeling financial constraints during to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was discussed how the budget could be reduced including whether hall hire and Zoom both needed to be included. The uncertainties regarding the timeline of vaccinations meant it was difficult to predict when restrictions will be lifted. Cllr Summers proposed, seconded by Cllr Williams, that the reserve of £500.00 should be drawn down to reduce the increase from £750 to £250. **It was resolved to demand a Precept from ESC for £3750 for the year 2021-2022.**
As a consequence, there will need to be an increase in subsequent years to rebuild the Council's reserve to the NALC recommendation that a PC should carry a reserve equalling 50% of its Precept.

10/20-21/11 Oral Reports from Councillors. Cllr Locke had been approached to ask whether it was possible to create a turning circle at the top of Mill Lane. An area near Jeptha's is becoming churned up and there have been further reports of vehicles becoming stuck attempting to turn in gateways. The Chairman stated that the parish council didn't own any land in the vicinity to create a turning area. The chairman asked if a barrier could be created in the gateway known to be a regular location for vehicles to get stuck. Cllr Fletcher stated it was down to driver capabilities. The chairman suggested that residents make a note on orders regarding the turning limitations along Mill Lane that can then relayed to delivery drivers to instruct them to either reverse up the Lane or reverse back out.

10/20-21/12 There were no planning matters.

10/20-21/13 The clerk reported that the order for 3 heritage signs has been submitted to Charlie Mitson at SCC Highways Department. Drawings and photographs of the existing signs have been submitted so the correct information can be transferred over. The Clerk has had confirmation of receipt of the information and has been informed that she will be contacted by the officer dealing with this project and will keep the Parish Council updated. County Cllr West and East Suffolk Cllr Cook reassured the parish council that the grant funding is secure as it was agreed during the 2020/21 year. County Cllr West stated he would contact the LHB team to confirm this. He also stated that forthcoming local elections may pause the process once Purdah is enforced for Cllrs in the period up to the elections, but funding is secure.

10/20-21/14 A report from the trustees of the Mary Revett Trust have provided a report (attached). The Clerk highlighted concerns raised within the report; "although we were initially asked if we would consider being Trustees, we have considered this further and believe that, at this stage, we should be described as being 'co-opted by the Parish Council to investigate the current position of the Trust', the question of formal investiture of Trustees being dealt with at a later stage." The Chairman agreed to follow up this letter with Mary.

10/20-21/15 Low Street triangle. The Chairman proposed large logs be used along the edge of the Low Street triangle that is currently being severely damaged by parked cars. Lord Suncliffe has offered logs that will be available through natural land management next autumn. The logs would be large enough to be visible and prevent cars becoming damaged or the logs removed. Cllrs resolved that this not only helped reduce financial costs to resolve the problem but created a more environmentally friendly solution.

10/20/20/16 Date of next Meeting Monday February 8th 2021

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