

**GLEMSFORD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON
28TH APRIL 2011**

Present	Rex Thake	Lucy Knox
	Colin Parmenter	Lynn Bloomfield
	Len Young	Michael Brown
	Tiffany Carr	Adrian Southgate

In attendance Sara Turner
Richard Kemp

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

There would be two recordings made of the minutes of the meeting, by Cllr. Carr and the Clerk.

78. WELCOME BY THE CHAIRMAN, Mrs. L. Knox

The Chairman explained that the meeting tonight was divided into two parts and would be treated as completely separate meetings. The annual parish meeting is run by the parishioners and as such, there is no limit on public question time.

The main parish council meeting is slightly different and will follow normal procedure, ie members of the public can ONLY speak in public question time, which will last for 15 minutes.

Over the past year, two street lights having G39 health and safety issues had been repaired at great cost. The fact had made national headlines. The bus shelter had been decorated inside with paintings from the primary school. Ingleby paints had provided the paint for the exterior of the shelter at no extra cost to village. The Village Hall had been decorated and new curtains had been hung.

The chairman extended her thanks to all organisations involved in the first Glemfest. She thanked Harriet North for her organisational skills and looked forward to this years event. There would also be more litter picking events this year, and high visibility jackets had been provided with the proceeds of the village of the year third place award.

The Sports Club was still continuing to be a success.

There had been a regrettable increase to the precept figures for the forthcoming year, and this had a knock-on effect on council tax.

79. Police Matters

The police had provided a written report of crime figures for the past year. These are as follows:

Burglary Dwelling	–	0 Reports	2010/2011	Decrease
from previous year		4 Reports	2009/2010	

60

Burglary Other Building – previous year		29 Reports	2010/2011	Same as
		29 Reports	2009/2010	
Vehicle Crime – from previous year		13 Reports	2010/2011	Decrease
		17 Reports	2009/2010	
Assault/Public Order – from previous year		21 Reports	2010/2011	Decrease
		10 Reports	2009/2010	
Theft – from previous year		20 Reports	2010/2011	Decrease
		23 Reports	2009/2010	
Criminal Damage – from previous year		40 Reports	2010/2011	Increase
		35 Reports	2009/2010	
Other – from previous year		11 Reports	2010/2011	Increase
		7 Reports	2009/2010	

80. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2010, having previously been circulated, were adopted and signed.

PROPOSED: Colin Parmenter

SECONDED: Rex Thake

81. District Councillors' Report

Cllr. Young reported that most of the work expedited over the course of this year was towards the amalgamation with Mid Suffolk and after the election there would be a chance to vote. Glemsford were very proud to have come third place in the village of the year competition and were pleased at the number of people attending the event as it showed a real community spirit.

The District Councillors had worked hard at Babergh to try and keep the council tax down. Babergh were best value for money over all the Suffolk councils but Cllr. Thake stated that people would need to fight for services, eg. the Library.

82. Suffolk County Councillor's Report

Cllr. Kemp reported that the past year at the Council has been extremely tough. The required reduction in public spending has forced local councils across the country to make difficult decisions in order to balance the budget. The approach to this in Suffolk is to 'divest' or close many of the services we know and cherish. The New Strategic Direction has caused a lot of controversy, but as we see the next financial year come, I hope that vital services in the community are not lost.

The County Council back in September 2009, agreed to implement the New Strategic Direction, which was then deemed as a new way to run the Council in order to save the sums of money that the County predicted would be cut from the Government Grant.

At the end of 2010 more detail came to light about the method the Council wished to take to overcome this hurdle. The main idea running through the report brought to Full Council was to look at ways in which the community could run Council services. The term 'divestment' was used to illustrate placing Council run services such as Libraries, Youth Clubs, and anything else that could legally be provided elsewhere into the community, or into the hands of businesses willing to provide and fund the service.

This method would, according to the administration, provide the means to cut the costs to the County Council but still provide the services that individuals relied on.

There have now been a number of consultations, or 'conversations' around the Libraries, the Country Parks, Care Homes, and Youth Clubs, to assess whether businesses are willing to take on the provision of services in place of the County Council.

The New Strategic Direction will continue through the year, and I will keep you up to date with the latest developments.

Towards the end of February every year, the County Council sets its budget. This year was one of the hardest budgets we have seen from the Council. Many services that provide for the community have been cut or lined up ready for divestment.

Over the next four years it is predicted that the County Council will have to save £125m, this year the budgeted saving is required to be a total of £42.5m.

Below please find a brief summary of the cuts at the Council.

- Community Meal Cost increase from £3.55 to £5
- Divestment/Closure of Youth Clubs
- Ending Healthy Schools Programme
- Reducing opening hours at Household Waste Recycling Centres and closing seven sites.
- Withdrawal of Bury Road Park and Ride
- Cease funding School Crossing Patrol Service
- Divesting the running and operation of Countryside Parks and other Countryside sites.
- Cease checking lorries if they are overloaded
- Divest Fire Control Service to another authority

This budget, along with the New Strategic Direction, has much of the Council changing in how it is going to provide services. Uncertain times lie ahead, and I will keep you informed of any developments.

In line with the County Council's New Strategic Direction, the decision has been made to divest the majority of Libraries in Suffolk.

At the beginning of February a consultation was held to ask the people of Suffolk their views on the Library service, and whether any community or business would be willing to take on the running of Libraries. At that stage Libraries were split into two different categories, the first being a community Library, and the second being a County Library. Community Libraries are those which tend to be smaller and attract users from the immediate area. They also tend to open fewer hours than other libraries. There are 29 libraries in Suffolk in this category, including Glemsford, Great Cornard, and Long Melford.

Within the consultation the County Council stated that if they do not receive adequate proposals or response from those people who use these Libraries, funding will stop from 2012.

The second form of Library is the County Library, these tend to be much bigger and serve a larger portion of the community. There are 15 of these Libraries, and the plan is to assess whether these can also be divested, apart from a collection of three individual libraries.

This consultation, which is still ongoing, is collecting views on all aspects of the Library service, including the mobile Libraries. We will find out after the 30th of April, what decisions or bids have been made.

In addition to the budget cuts as specified above, the County Council has made significant reductions in the levels of subsidy provided to passenger transport, a total of £2.2m, which enable commercial services to operate in non-peak time slots. This means that some services will cease completely, whereas others will stop operating in the evenings, and on weekends.

This has affected many services across the County and in our area.

In addition to the cuts to the bus services, the popular eXplore card, which provided reduced bus rates for those 16-19 year olds in the county, has also been stopped saving the council around £1.7m.

The County Council at the end of February released information of all those buses that will now cease. You can find all the relevant information here – http://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/changes_to_public_transport_services_april_2011

At the beginning of the year, the County Council launched e-petitioning, where members of the public can create, and sign petitions in order to bring an issue to the Council's attention.

The system works on a basis that once a petition achieves 3,675 signatures the issue will have to be brought to Full Council and debated. This had already happened with the petition to save school crossing patrols and is likely to occur even more throughout the year.

As a result of constitutional changes, the beginning of 2011 heralded a new era in scrutiny for the Council. Instead of the previous arrangement where scrutiny was based around a theme, the County decided that having only one scrutiny committee would be more effective.

Previously the Council had a total of eight different scrutiny committees, covering a range of subjects.

- Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Committee
- Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee
- Customer Services Scrutiny Committee
- Environment, Waste and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee
- Health Scrutiny Committee
- Public Protection Scrutiny Committee
- Resources, Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Roads and Transport Scrutiny Committee

These themed scrutiny committees have now been amalgamated to form one scrutiny committee that covers all items. The committee meets every month for an entire day to discuss the latest items requiring scrutiny, making recommendations, and questioning decisions by the administration. So far the committee has discussed items such as Country Parks, Stroke Care and the upcoming implications of incorporating some of the PCT functions into the Council. The Scrutiny committee discusses business in public, and therefore anyone is able to attend.

83. Open Public Questions

Pauline Currie asked for clarification on why the council signed a contract with Alred McAlpine when they would not repair G39 lights. The Clerk explained that at the time of signing nothing was known about G39 issues and as soon as it came to light, the Council changed their streetlighting contract to Suffolk County Council. She asked if there was any way costs could be recouped, but Cllr. Kemp said that the small print in the contracts would not allow this. Martin Cole – asked about accounts

Fiona Cole asked why the accounts were not presented at the annual parish meeting. The Clerk explained that they were always presented at the June/July meeting once they had been audited.

Ann Dallieu informed the meeting about SALC. Cllr. Thake reported that although the council had previously been members, they had been given bad advice and had decided to withdraw. Cllr. Young advised that SALC now ran under a different regime and it would be a good idea to look into rejoining.

PROPOSED: Ann Dallieu

SECONDED: Pauline Currie

It was proposed that in future there would be an itemised list of monies spent, which would be available at the annual parish meeting each April.

PROPOSED: Ann Dallieu

SECONDED: Fiona Cole

Martin Cole asked why the parish meeting held two weeks previous had been recalled. The Chairman read a letter of complaint signed by Stephen Plumb, Fiona Cole, Sue Rayner, Hugh Norris, Pauline /Currie and Mark Ruane that alleged an illegal meeting had taken place recently along with other complaints about the running of the previous meeting. The Clerk reported a letter from Suffolk Police stating that no complaints or investigation had taken place over the allegations of an illegal meeting, but that the Parish Council would be pursuing the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Cllr. Thake asked for clarification that all six people on the letter were in agreement with paragraph six, which was the accusation of the alleged meeting. It was confirmed that all were in agreement. Fiona Cole advised that on the September 2010 meeting, it was not clear who was chairing the meeting. Cllr. Thake said that the accusations implicated the whole of the parish council and inferred that all had acted illegally. The Parish Council wanted to ascertain where the information had originated as no meeting had been chaired by the Clerk, and he felt that this would now expedite to a standards issue. Babergh had a copy of the letter which had been passed to the standards committee, and this could have serious implications.

Jill Moore wished to see an annual up to date financial report. She was not happy with an increase of 16% on the council tax bill and asked to compare the bills of Long Melford and Lavenham who were similar sizes to Glemsford. Cllr. Thake explained that because both villages were classed as tourist villages, they then had financial help with streetlighting, street cleaning etc. Cllr. Thake stated that he thought this was totally unfair but had questioned this in the past.

Cllr. Young stated that thirty new street lights had been put in Long Melford which had been funded, and parishioners must realise that Glemsford had to pay for their own, sometimes at a cost of £7,000 per unit.

Mark Ruane asked for clarification of the increases in streetlighting and grasscutting. The Chairman explained that because of unexpected expenditure on the Village Hall and G39 issues during the past year, Parish Council reserves had been depleted and these needed replenishing.

Cllr. Young would like to see more feedback for the annual parish meeting, such as from the Social Club, tree warden etc.

Mike Sewell said that members of the parish are concerned that not enough information is being fed from the Council. Cllr. Young and Thake advised that committees in the past had been disbanded because of lack of interest.

Duncan Grafen suggested that the annual parish council next year should be able to facilitate all known societies and organisations to contribute towards the meeting.

PROPOSED: Duncan Grafen

SECONDED: Len Young

It was proposed that the accounts should be shown at future annual parish meetings.

PROPOSED: Ann Mallieu

SECONDED: Pauline Currie

Harriet North advised the meeting of the proposals for library. A steering group had been formed for sponsors. Although this does not allow all to collaborate fully, it did provide the opportunity to form together an expression of interest. A proposal had been made for the clerk to have a desk within the library so that the public can get more information from a central point and more access to the running of the council. Suffolk County Council currently lease the property and it was asked if the Parish Council would waive the annual popcorn rent and look for financial support to run the library.

PROPOSED: Hugh Norris

SECONDED: Colin Parmenter

Cllr. Thake suggested that the Library steering group joined Clare, Lavenham and Long Melford to share information and support each other.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

84. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2011, having previously been circulated, were adopted and signed.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Carr

SECONDED: Cllr. Parmenter

85. Public Question Time

Harriet North discussed dates for the forthcoming litter picks. It was agreed that the first would take place on Saturday 28th May 2011.

Harriet North advised the meeting that Stephanie Lloyd from Babergh had approached the basketball coaches and advised that they could coach on a Tuesday evening. To this end, the basketball courts were now being revamped.

86. Clerks Report

The Clerk explained that she had attended the meeting against medical advice from her oncologist, because of an official complaint towards herself and the Parish Council, and due to comments made by members of the public at the last meeting. She explained that she had not taken any time off work at all since her diagnosis and operation back in November, but had not attended meetings due to risk of infection. The Clerk thanked Cllr. Carr for helping with the minutes and also Mr. Callender for updating the website during this time.

The G39 Street light on Skates Hill was being repaired.

The Parish Council accounts were now with the accountant being prepared for audit.

The playgroup were not using the hall and the Clerk felt that it should be advertised that there was a long term booking available. Cllr. Carr would talk to the playgroup about it and see if they wished to return.

The Fair would be attending on 7th May for one week.

87. Financial Matters**Account Status**

Current	3122.50
High Interest	5397.94
Sports Club	1397.84

Payments made out of Council

Allianz	3,275.41
Inland Revenue	627.80
Suffolk Acre	25.00
Suffolk Acre	1089.25

Accounts to be paid

Glemsford Matters	61.56
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88. Planning Matters**Cllrs. Thake and Young would not take part in the voting process on planning applications****New Applications****B/11/00348/FHA 26 Park Lane**

Erection of two-storey side extension.

Agreed to recommend this application for approval.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Carr**SECONDED:** Cllr. Brown**B/11/00338/FHA 14 Whitlands**

Erection of single-storey rear extension.

Agreed to recommend this application for approval.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Carr**SECONDED:** Cllr. Southgate**B/11/00351/FHA 60 Kings Road**

Erection of two-storey rear extension.

Agreed to recommend this application for approval.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Parmenter**SECONDED:** Cllr. Bloomfield**B/11/00266/FHA 15 Angel Lane**

Erection of single-storey rear extension and front porch.

Agreed to recommend this application for approval.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Carr**SECONDED:** Cllr. Brown

B/11/00347/FHA 69 Brook Street

Replacement of windows to front, side and rear and replacement of door to side.

Agreed to recommend this application for approval.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Parmenter

SECONDED: Cllr. Brown

Applications Granted

B/11/00052/FHA/AS 9 Third Avenue

Erection of single-storey front extension (including conversion of existing internal garage to additional living space) as amended by revised drawing no. 01, received on 9th February 2011.

B/10/01517/FHA Brookfield Place, Low Street

Erection of single-storey side extension; erection of front entrance porch; and erection of pitched roof over existing dormer window in front roof slope.

B/11/00070/FHA/LM Oxdown Barn, Duffs Hill

Insertion of 1 No. window to north-east elevation (in lieu of existing door); insertion of 1 no. window to south-west elevation (in lieu of existing smaller window).

Any other planning matters

Cllr. Carr would send pictures of the proposed bench at the cemetery to Councillors for their perusal before the next meeting.

89. Correspondence

The Clerk reported a letter of complaint signed by Stephen Plumb and five other members of the parish. The Clerk had spoken to the police regarding the accusations and had received an email from Hannah Partington stating that no complaints had been received about the running of meetings, nor had the police been called out to any meeting. It was agreed that further information be sought from SALC and the police and the matter would be expedited towards Standards if needed.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Thake

SECONDED: Cllr. Young

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.11 pm.

Approved.....

Date

Next meeting 10th May 2011