

PEASENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Peasehall Parish Council virtual meeting
held via Zoom Meetings on Wednesday 30th September 2020 at 7:00 pm.

2020/54 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Steve Pewsey - Chair
Cllr. Frank Potter – Vice-Chair
Cllr. Roger Benstead
Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener
Cllr. Stephanie Liston
Cllr. Ric Earle
Cllr. Peter Dance

Apologies for absence:

None.

In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO
County and District Cllr. Stephen Burroughes
2 members of the public

2020/55 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Peter Dance declared an interest in item 2020/60a.

2020/56 Public Forum

County and District Cllr. Stephen Burroughes summarised his previously circulated reports. Highlights from the County Council report included the news that Lowestoft's third river crossing has been given the go ahead. A local primary school won a competition to name it Gull Wing. The crossing is planned to reduce traffic congestion and to help attract investment. The government's contribution to the bridge is £75m. Highlights from the District Council report included the news that the swimming pool in Bungay has received a £3.4m refurbishment. It will offer state-of-the-art leisure facilities to the public and nearby schools and is now named the Waveney Valley Leisure Centre.

With regard to the old primary school site, Cllr. Burroughes said that the County Council are considering putting the site on the market for sale which may potentially offset development in unwanted areas of the parish. There are problems with access from the highway which will need to be worked around. Crews are due to tidy up the site but this has been delayed due to the wet weather. The County Council will also ensure the structure is sound and safe. In response to a question, Cllr. Burroughes said he thought school and office supplies were being stored on site and possibly furniture.

With regard to Remembrance Day and V-J Day, Cllr Burroughes said he thought there would be limited commemorations this year due to the coronavirus pandemic and the government's rule of six. He said he would forward any information he receives to the Clerk as the government's guidelines could have changed by then.

With regard to the Local Plan, Cllr. Burroughes said he asked for the site adjacent to Farthings to be removed from the plan at the Council meeting but he was told it was a 'non-problem'. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Burroughes for his support and efforts. Cllr. Burroughes said he would add his support to a letter to the Secretary of State as fairness, openness and transparency are needed. In response to a question from Cllr. Ric Earle, Cllr. Burroughes replied that his Officers informed him that the letters had been made available to the Inspector but he was unable to say whether he had looked at them. Cllr. Burroughes said that the Inspector had considered the wider picture and, in the round, felt that the parcel of land could be accepted for development. Cllr. Earle replied that he had received an email from the Leader of the Council, Cllr, Steve Gallant dated 17/09/20, who said that the correspondence was received out of time and therefore was not included on the website nor considered by the Inspector. Cllr. Earle read out the relevant paragraph. Cllr. Burroughes said that this was not what he had been told but asked Cllr. Earle to forward the email to him and he will ask questions. Cllr. Frank Potter said there was evidence in the Inspector's report that showed he had considered the letters (item 2020/60a refers).

Cllr. Burroughes left the meeting.

2020/57 Minutes

The Council approved as accurate the minutes of the virtual meetings held on 29th July 2020, 19th August 2020 and 15th September 2020.

2020/58 Matters Arising

a) The Council noted the resignations of Cllr. Kenneth Parry-Brown and Cllr. Norman Ball. Cllr. Frank Potter proposed that the Council writes to both retired members to express its gratitude and thanks for their long years of service to the Council and the village. Cllr. Stephen Pewsey seconded. All in favour.

ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey to send letters.

b) Cllr. Stephen Pewsey said the new bus service had begun. Border Bus has reported that low hanging branches on trees at the Knoll are in the way and have requested that these are trimmed.

ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey to contact The Landmark Trust.

c) Cllr. Stephen Pewsey asked for consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan to be deferred to a future meeting as further research is required.

ACTION: Clerk to add to Outstanding Actions list.

2020/59 Casual Vacancies

The Council noted that the period for elections had expired and it could now co-opt applicants for the three Councillor vacancies. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies on the website, the noticeboard, the Yoxmere Fisherman, in local businesses and by word of mouth. Cllr. Stephanie Liston suggested that diversity needs to be an important consideration to ensure the Council is better balanced going forward. Each applicant will be asked to submit a short written statement about their background, their interests and why they wish to join the Council. The applicants will then be interviewed by a small group of Councillors and a vote will be taken by Full Council.

ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey and Clerk to progress.

2020/60 Parish Matters

a) The Council considered Cllr. Ric Earle's draft letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The draft letter protests about the inclusion of a site in a Local Plan which the Trustees and the Parish Council have consistently opposed and to bring the exceptional circumstances which lead to the inclusion of the site to the Secretary's attention.

Cllr. Stephen Pewsey said that the Secretary may be not be interested in a minor dispute over a small plot of land in a Suffolk village however he might take an interest if an important element of local planning protocol had been breached which could have national implications. Cllr. Pewsey suggested that the letter should be a simple question asking whether it was legal or appropriate for a planning authority to knowingly include a site for potential development in a local plan while fully aware that the site was not available, having been withdrawn from consideration by the proponent and vigorously opposed by the Parish Council as principal consultees. Cllr. Pewsey said the Secretary may be interested if a principal authority perhaps unwittingly sets a planning precedent by wilfully ignoring the updated status of an earmarked site which would have unintended consequences for all kinds of developments proposed across the country. Cllr. Ric Earle accepted this amendment to his draft letter and said the Secretary had unfettered powers and could remove the site from the plan.

Cllr. Frank Potter opposed the proposal to write to the Secretary of State. Referring to the letters sent to the Inspector, Cllr. Potter said there was evidence that the Inspector had considered the letters as shown in the his report: 'Although representations question whether this site is available, on balance, I consider that it should be considered as developable in terms of the framework, as there is a reasonable prospect that it will be available and viably developed at the point envisaged in the housing trajectory. The issue of flood risk and the sequential test has been considered above.' Cllr. Potter said he is not in favour of the development and has voted against it at every opportunity however, the Council has lost the argument and it should not accuse the planning authority and the Inspector of ignoring matters which they have clearly not

ignored, nor should the Council be suggesting any impropriety from them or that the Local Plan is a miscarriage of justice.

Cllr. Stephanie Liston stressed the importance of any letter to the Secretary being evidence based and appropriate and for the Council to maintain its integrity. Cllr. Earle agreed but said we have written evidence that the Inspector did not consider the letters as referred to in the email dated 17/09/20. Cllr. Peter Dance noted Cllr. Frank Potter's comments but said it was not unreasonable to write to the Secretary of State because of the secrecy of the two people whose names were redacted. Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener raised the question again about who put the site forward for consideration and why these names have been redacted by the District Council. Cllr. Levett-Scrivener called for openness and transparency and for these names to be in the public domain.

The Council voted on whether to send Cllr, Ric Earle's draft letter, with amendments, to the Secretary of State. Cllr. Ric Earle asked for the names of the votes to be recorded in the minutes. Votes in favour: Cllr. Ric Earle. Votes against: Cllr. Frank Potter, Cllr. Roger Benstead, Cllr. Stephanie Liston. Abstentions: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey. Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Peter Dance previously declared an interest and took no part in the vote.

The Council voted on whether to send Cllr. Stephen Pewsey's suggested letter. Cllr. Frank Potter voted against. Cllr. Stephen Pewsey, Cllr. Ric Earle, Cllr. Roger Benstead, Cllr. Stephanie Liston voted in favour. Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener and Cllr. Peter Dance previously declared an interest and took no part in the vote.

ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey to draft a letter and circulate for comments.

b) The Council welcomed the well-meaning suggestion from a resident that permission is requested from the County Council to allow village children to play in the primary school playground and fields. It was agreed that this will not be possible until the building and site is returned to a suitable and safe condition.

c) The Council postponed discussing the proposal from Orwell Housing to develop 12 homes on Mill Road until further information is received from the District Council's Housing Enabling Officer.

ACTION: Clerk to add to next month's agenda.

d) The Council agreed to provide a Christmas tree and lights but to cancel the customary switch on and refreshment event due to the current government rules on gatherings during the coronavirus pandemic.

e) The Council agreed to provide wreaths to lay at the War Memorial and the cemetery orchard to mark Remembrance Day and V-J Day but to cancel the customary wreath laying event due to the current government rules on gatherings during the coronavirus pandemic. The Chairman and one or two Councillors will lay the wreaths.

ACTION: Clerk to order wreaths.

f) The Council noted that the changes to the General Permitted Development Order and Use Classes Order do not have any major implications for Peasenhall.

g) Cllr. Stephen Pewsey led a discussion about the way the Council communicates with the parish and the wider community via the noticeboards and the website. It was agreed that the layout of the village website could be improved and the information needs to be brought up-to-date. The former may require the expertise of an IT professional.

ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey and the Clerk to take forward.

2020/61 Maintenance

a) The Council discussed the poor condition of the two noticeboards in the cemetery and the wall-mounted noticeboard on the Causeway. It was agreed to seek advice from local carpenters about how to replace these with new, weatherproof noticeboards and the estimated cost. The Council agreed to consider providing a further noticeboard on Mill Hill in the longer term.

ACTION: Cllr. Nick Levett-Scrivener to progress quotes.

b) The Council agreed to move the safety boards to the outside of the railings on a bridge over the Gull to improve passage for wheeled bins by the refuse collectors.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange.

c) The Council agreed to remove the brazier from the cemetery and to provide a new litter and green bin. The requirement to move the bins to and from the collection point will be added to the maintenance contract which will be renewed in early 2021. Cllr. Stephen Pewsey agreed to undertake this in the meantime.

ACTION: Cllr. Stephen Pewsey and Clerk to arrange.

d) The Council noted the damage to the Assembly Hall windsock.

e) An update on the refurbishment of the telephone kiosk was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to add to next month's agenda.

2020/62 Councillors' Reports

Highways Issues – Cllr. Stephen Pewsey advised that Highways are aware of the 'sinkhole' outside Sibton Nursery School.

2020/63 Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position including receipts.

b) The Council approved the bank reconciliation for Qtr 1 2020-2021.

c) The Council reviewed the budgeted versus actual income and expenditure for Qtr 1 2020-2021.

d) The Council authorised the payments below en bloc:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary (August 2020)	Sharon Smith	£233.32	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Salary (September 2020)	Sharon Smith	£233.32	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's PAYE (Quarter 2 2020-2021)	HM Revenue and Customs	£175.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£12.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Councillor Training	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£50.00	LGA 1972 s.111

2020/64 Correspondence

The Council noted the correspondence received between 24th July 2020 and 24th September 2020

2020/65 Questions to the Chair/Items for the Next Agenda

a) It was agreed to add cemetery maintenance to the next agenda including the overgrown path and a tree survey.

b) It was agreed to add a review of Standing Orders to the next agenda including consideration of the duration of meetings.

c) It was agreed to add a discussion of Highways matters to the next agenda including extending speed limit zones and the provision of speed limit signage.

ACTION: Clerk to invite the Highways Community Liaison Engineer to attend.

2020/66 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the next virtual meeting of the Council which is scheduled for 28th October 2020 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.