***SUTTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL***

***MINUTES***

of Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 13 July 2020**

at 7pmby Zoom

**Present:** Chairman - to be appointed

Cllr N Ward (Vice Chairman)

Cllr C Hall

Cllr R Hirst

Cllr Chalklen

Cllr R Merriam

Cllr A Betteridge

M Merriam (Parish Clerk)

**In Attendance:** Stirling Askew (community/military liaison)

Cllr A Reid (for part of meeting)

Cllr J Mallinder (for part of the meeting)

1. **To appoint a new Chair**

The Parish Clerk opened the meeting and directed the councillors to the first item on the Agenda which was to appoint a new Chair. Cllr Chalklen had previously declared that she would be willing to be Chair and this was brought to the meeting. After a short discussion and by a show of hands it was unanimously agreed that Cllr Chalklen be the new Chair. She was welcomed into this role, which commenced immediately.

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

There were none.

1. **To receive declarations of interest in respect of Agenda items**

Cllr Merriam indicated that he would be speaking later in respect of the domestic allowance payable to Marion Merriam the Parish Clerk and this was acknowledged.

1. **To approve the draft minutes of meeting held on 11 May 2020**

These had previously been circulated. The draft minutes were approved, proposed by Cllr Hirst and seconded by Cllr Ward.

1. **To receive brief reports from:**
2. Cllr Reid, SCC, summarised his latest report which had previously been circulated to the councillors:

* New plan sets out how Suffolk will prevent and respond to Covid19 outbreak;
* Suffolk’s resilience partners continue to provide PPE equipment where most needed (no one in this area has gone without it)
* Temporary relaxation of concessionary travel arrangements in Suffolk to end next month;
* Looking after the vulnerable is top priority;
* Council presses government to provide lifetime benefits from large energy project;
* Better broadband for Suffolk reaches 100,000th customer as third phase is agreed.

1. Cllr Mallinder, ESC, summarised his latest report which had previously been circulated to the councillors:

* Communities and supporting residents;
* Grants, funding and business matters;
* Environmental Health
* Operational Updates (dealing with increased littering, play areas and grounds maintenance). There are new conservation areas around with signs saying “Pardon the weeds we are feeding the bees”;
* The Teapot Project in Woodbridge is not a foodbank but is an organisation existing to assist people who need a helping hand.

Cllr Reid’s and Cllr Mallinder’s reports are available to read in full on the SHPC website.

1. **To discuss finance**
   1. Cllr Merriam updated everyone on the finance position, including the recent VAT claim which had gone through; he then explained the bank reconciliation for month ended 30 June 2020. Bank statements had previously been circulated by the Parish Clerk and would be signed by a Councillor.
   2. The Parish Clerk had previously circulated the Internal Auditor’s Report. There were a few things which required attention:

* The Chair had previously been given authority by the Council to sign cheques up to the value of £100 but anything over that sum was to be brought to the Council for agreement. The Auditor said that there was no mention of this in the Financial Regulations and they should be amended accordingly to record this. This was proposed by Cllr Ward and seconded by Cllr Merriam;
* Reference to GDPR should be made in the Council’s Risk Assessment;
* Transparency Code to be checked for compliance;
* Re General Reserves, the Council should review whether Earmarked reserves need to be established;
* A LGA S137 (for coding expenses) should be created in the cash book.

The Parish Clerk would address these and bring them before the next meeting.

* 1. Cllr Merriam updated the Council regarding the increase in parish clerks’ Homeworking Allowance as published by SALC. There was an increase from £18 to £26, effective 6 April 2020. Approval was needed for acceptance of the increase and for the backdated allowance to be paid to the Parish Clerk. This was proposed by Mr Askew and seconded by Cllr Ward.

1. **To discuss sewerage works due to take place in Easton Road**

Mr Askew said that the estate classed as “The Rise” is going to be detached from the MOD network for sewerage waste sometime this year. It is not yet known what roads are to be dug up but two pumping stations will be erected at the main entrance. Mr Askew said that he will report when he hears anything further.

1. **To discuss update on potential small community project**

There was some discussion regarding this project. Cllr Mallinder suggested that when it does get off the ground it would be a good idea to start off with book swaps. It was mentioned that the thrift shop at The Barnsdale Centre could well open on a Saturday morning and the coffee lounge also have their book swap room. It was agreed to place the community project on hold meantime.

1. **To consider any planning applications received**

No planning applications were waiting to be considered. One had been received but it was for Sutton Parish Council.

1. **To consider the LGA Model Member Code of Conduct consultation doc**

The Parish Clerk drew attention to the draft LGA Model Member Code of Conduct which had been sent to the councillors. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had circulated this draft for consideration to all local councils. Although local councils already have a Code of Conduct, the Committee of Standards in Public Life recommended to the Government that there be in place an updated model member code of conduct for all tiers of local government, to maintain high standards of conduct in government at all levels, to protect the integrity of decision making and maintain public confidence. After a brief discussion the Parish Clerk said she would respond accordingly to the LGA.

1. **To receive public questions**

There were none.

1. **To consider correspondence received by the Parish Clerk**

An email had been received with regard to dog waste on the open heathland at Sutton Heath. This was discussed and it was acknowledged as being a longstanding problem. It was agreed that although Sutton Heath Parish Council were not responsible for the lack of bins, as a community gesture a couple of signs should be displayed before the entrance to the Heath reminding dog walkers of their responsibility in picking up their dog’s waste and disposing of it appropriately. Cllr Mallinder said that he would be on the lookout for standard signage in this regard, which would be paid for out of an established community budget. Cllr Betteridge said that she would arrange for the signs to be worded and laminated. It was agreed that if the problem continued further action would be discussed.

1. **To discuss any other business (for info only)**

Mr Askew mentioned that the DIO license for The Alan Crompton Hall had run out on 27 May. The options were to renew the license (to retain it) or terminate it. The hall is not in use due to the coronavirus and may not be for some time. If the license was terminated the DIO would require another preparation fee of £210 on top of the £300 which is paid twice yearly. Due to the next meeting being two months away action would be required now and it was agreed that the Parish Clerk would email the DIO to ask for the license to be put on hold.

1. **To agree the date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 14 September.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Signed: \_\_\_­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Parish Clerk

Date: