

**THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 7.30pm in the Community Library, Thurston Community College, Thurston.

**In the Chair: Chair Cllr. Dashper**

**Present:** Cllrs. Fawcett, Hasler, Masters, Mrs Morris, Moss, Mrs O'Connell and Rainbow

**In Attendance:** Mrs V Waples, Clerk, County Cllr. P. Otton, 3 members of the public and 1 representative from Pigeon Land Development Ltd.

1. **OPENING** – The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30 pm and thanked all for attending. A statement was read out indicating that, in accordance with the changes in legislation, the public and councillors were permitted to film, record, photograph or use social media to report on the proceedings of the meeting. A full transcript is available from the Clerk.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** –
  - a. Apologies for absence – apologies of absence had been received from Cllr. Robinson for personal commitments.  
Council noted that Cllr. Thomas had, for personal reasons, submitted his resignation from the Parish Council, which had been accepted by the Chair. The Clerk had liaised with Mid Suffolk Electoral Department and the Vacancy had been advertised in accordance with regulations.
  - b. Approval of apologies for absence – Council agreed to approve the apologies submitted for absence, aif.
  - c. Apologies of absence were also noted from District Cllr. Haley.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS INCLUDING GIFTS OF HOSPITALITY EXCEEDING £25** –
  - a. There were no Pecuniary Interests for the Agenda under discussion.  
The following local non-pecuniary interests for the Agenda under discussion were declared:  
Cllrs. Fawcett and Mrs O'Connell as Friends of Thurston Library.  
There were no gifts of hospitality exceeding £25 declared.
  - b. There were no declarations of lobbying by those Councillors present.
  - c. There were no requests for dispensations for the Agenda under discussion.
  - d. Rofl – all have been returned – any changes need to be notified within 28 days.
4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February were agreed as true and accurate records, aif. The Chairman of the meeting duly signed the minutes as such. Council noted the draft minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 which would be referred to under Agenda Item 9, these were approved in principal and would be signed at the next Policy & Resources Committee Meeting in June 2018.

The Parish Council meeting was closed to allow the Public Forum to take place.

5. **PUBLIC FORUM** –
 

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS OTTON'S REPORT** – Cllr. Otton was invited to submit her written report – a summary of the items covered is repeated below (the full version can be seen at Appendix C):

  - A copy of the Independent response re the Schools Travel Consultation
  - BEAST FROM THE EAST - problems with snow and road closures. Hopefully most will now be cleared, however there will be a back log for any works that had been scheduled. I am meeting with Mark Stevens on Monday to get a face to face discussion on the highways contract. Issues were raised as to the length of time taken to bring the project to fruition.

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

- Budget for 2018-19 confirmed – concern at the proposed cuts. These included a £12m cut to adult care, funding reductions for Citizens Advice and Trading Standards, and cuts to rural bus services. Therefore, we were unable to support the budget.
- Concerns raised over accountability and transparency of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Board (SPSLB).
- Next phase of “Raising the Bar” strategy announced.
- Consultation on School Transport - this has now ended. I have sent the clerk my group’s official response.
- Suffolk to set up an outcomes-based contract to support adolescents on the edge of care
- New drone technology for managing blue light service incidents.
- Update on Ipswich’s Upper Orwell Crossings.
- A14 I have asked Highways England to get the eastbound slip road sign reinstated.
- ROUGH SLEEPERS- request submitted to the chief fire officer if the manned fire stations in Bury and Ipswich could be used as emergency shelters when the temperature drops below zero.
- Station Entrance and Crossing - the state of the road entrance into the car park area has been passed onto SCC.
- Beyton wanted to extend their speed limits – it is possible that the Chairman will liaise with Thurston PC for further input on this matter.
- Consultation on speed limit to Mount Road – *the Clerk agreed to send on the papers to Cllr. Otton keeping her apprised on this matter and the TRO including the PC’s response.*

Question –

Potholes – it was questioned as to why 11,000 potholes had been reported in Suffolk as compared to 3,000 in Norfolk?

**DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS** – Cllr. Haley had previously submitted his apologies due to other commitments. The following items were brought to the meetings attention:

- MSDC Planning Referrals Minutes of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 were now available to download and that amendments had been made to the 1<sup>st</sup> draft.
- He would be making available a list of all the organisations who had received funds from his and Cllr. Jewson’s Locality Budgets.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC** – the following issues were raised by members of the public present

- Freight noises – impact on properties adjoining the railway line – brought up before and occasionally Cllr. Otton will assist. Freight traffic and speed has increased over the past 18 months or so. 18 freight trains on average an evening – report (as provided by Network Rail) states that they are exceeding the noise and vibration levels that are acceptable. When the trains pass through at a slower speed there is no or little issue. There is a concern that the trains are travelling faster than the warning signals at the station - is there an opportunity for pooled money to erect sound barriers or baffles?

The Chair of the Parish Council confirmed that the PC will try and find a senior contact to write to. It was noted that the Woodland Trust would be happy to assist with planting of trees to try and muffle the sounds but MSDC had previously taken the trees down. Agreed that the Parish Council would try and find out why the trees were removed in the first place and whether they intend to replace them.

Sound and vibration are the problems, but the speed is what causes the issue.

- The Forge Church Community Involvement – a request had been submitted for by The Forge Church for projects with in which they could get involved and be helpful to the communities that we meet in. They wished to be good news for the community of Thurston and to have a positive impact. The meeting was asked to consider areas where the group might be of assistance and the following were agreed: tidying around play areas on Heath

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Road; Bus Shelter cleaning; BT kiosk on Barton Road kiosk. The Clerk was asked to enquire whether they had liaised with the Church over the graveyard.

- Request for Public Noticeboards in the Village – can there be more public noticeboards as there is only one at the Post Office. Open noticeboards would be best. Issues arising with this request – where to site the noticeboards as there were limited space and who will look after an open noticeboard? Noted however that with an expanding village there will be a need for further sites coming forward. The PC agreed that this would be the best time to consider new noticeboards coming forth and will contact the PO and see if that one can be replaced with a more modern one.
- PCSO – concern that the parish is paying for the PCSO and the issue is that no-one sees him. No reports in the Parish Magazine as to what has been happening and how they were being covered.
- Issue re lack of stickers – a resident had requested no cold caller stickers and despite the PCSO taking her name and address and promising to deliver them, none had arrived.

#### **6. POLICE MATTERS –**

- a. Council noted that the latest SNT report was via the website as direct link to Stowmarket SNT.
- b. Council received the latest Thurston SNT Report detailing the work undertaken over the past month by PCSO Matt Smith which had been produced following reports submitted to the Clerk from PCSO Matt Smith. Now that the new Inspector and Sergeant are in place at Stowmarket SNT dates for a meeting will be arranged to carry out a review of policing in Thurston.
- c. To note that a summarized version of the above report detailing the type of calls received and attended will be inserted into the village newsletter monthly – the Clerk was awaiting this information, and this would now be a regular feature in the Thurston Newsletter.
- d. To receive village reports of concerns from those present – Is Neighbourhood Watch still in existence? Good Neighbour Scheme is there such a scheme in place and how can this be explored?

#### **7. STATUTORY BUSINESS –**

- a. To receive nominations for the posts of Councillor following the remaining casual vacancy as advertised in accordance with section 232 of the 1972 Act – it was noted that as of yet none that have come forward yet. The Clerk agreed to arrange for a postcard to be circulated to all residents informing them that there were 2 vacancies to be filled.
- b. To consider the adoption of a Member/Officer Protocol (as per the circulated paper) – it was noted that this had been reviewed at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting and whilst it is within the remit of that committee to approve for adoption policies that are deemed to be appropriate for the Council, Cllr. Rainbow had requested that it came before full Council for formal adoption. Adoption of the Protocol was approved by all.

#### **8. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS –**

- a. To consider further information received from Network Rail or partners with regards to the request that further safety measures or improvement works be considered at Thurston Railway Station – the meeting was advised that there had been no further information coming forward from MSDC on the action points that had arisen from the meeting held in December 2017 – it had been reported by Cllr. Haley that MLM Consulting had submitted their report to the District Planning Corporate Manager who would be studying it the following week. It was believed that this would take the form of an interim strategy and that it would not be an enabler for circumventing anything further turning up. Agreement was forthcoming that if the report did not contain a proposal the PC would like to make a comment on this indicating that this would be totally inappropriate if it allowed development to commence and the condition was sidestepped. The Clerk agreed to continue to chase on this matter.

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

- 9. FINANCE** (for financial details see Appendix A at the end of the minutes)
- a. The schedule detailing the accounts awaiting payment was presented to Council for approval and agreed by all present, aif.
  - b. The schedule detailing the accounts paid since the last meeting was presented to Council and approved. A copy of which can be seen at Appendix A.
  - c. It was noted that income in the total sum of £3.55 had been received since the last meeting. A copy of the details of all income received can be seen at Appendix A.
  - d. The Bank Reconciliation for the period ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 was presented to Council and approved by all. Council's bank balances stood at £80,254.93 overall with cleared balances being £79,435.51.
  - e. To consider and receive the Internal Control Report as carried out by Cllr. Rainbow on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 – noted items covered at Policy & Resources Committee Meeting (*see minutes of that meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018*). It was noted that the Internal Control report had been expanded to cover changes in legislation and would be used from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
  - f. To consider the Policy & Resources Committee's recommendation of the appointment of Internal Auditor for the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 – Council was in full agreement to accept the recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee to appoint Trevor Brown CPFA as the Council's Internal Auditor, aif. Council was in agreement that the scope of internal audit was appropriate for a council the size of Thurston and that the work to be carried out was proportionate and would provide the assurances needed to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. It was further agreed that Council considered Mr Brown competent to carry out this task and independent of the Parish Council.
  - g. To consider further the costs of installing a concrete litter bin at the bottom of the New Green Car Park next to the Youth Shelter – remove from the agenda until sourced.
  - h. To consider further information received concerning Data Protection and changes to the Data Protection Regime – update
  - i. To consider the cost of retro fitting a Bluetooth ability to collect data from the Council owned mobile vehicle activated sign at a cost of £350 ex. VAT – the meeting agreed that it would be advantageous if both units had the same software and agreed to the upgrade at a cost of £350.00 ex VAT, aif.
  - j. To consider a donation to Mid Suffolk CAB – Council considered the email request for a donation to CAB for the coming year. Noting that the PC has a balance in its budgeted expenditure for donations of £450 it was agreed that a one-off donation could also be considered for this financial year. It was confirmed that the trigger point for such donations is normally a request and that all needed to meet the following criteria – for local people and of local benefit. It was proposed and agreed that £225.00 should be offered for this financial year. It was also agreed that the PC would be open to an approach from Bury St Edmunds CAB as aware that residents might use both centres. Furthermore, given the growth facing Thurston, the PC agreed that it should initiate discussions with CAB over the possibility of having an outreach in Thurston.

**10. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED** – none had been received.

**11. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND GROUPS -**

- a. Planning
  - i. To consider the following Planning Applications:
  - ii. to note that the Parish Council submitted a response to the following planning applications since the last meeting:
    - DC/18/00692 – recommended refusal for specified tree works
    - DC/18/00641 – concerns raised at some of the work contained within the proposal
  - iii. to note decisions coming forth – (*see Appendix A*)

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

- iv. to receive comments from Mid Suffolk District Council Planning Department on DC/18/00363 - the Clerk made the meeting aware of an email received from the Planning Officer dealing with this case which stated that MSDC was aware that work had already commence on this application and that their enforcement team are looking into it. Planning permission has not yet been granted permission for this application, and the case expires towards the end of March. An update will be given closer to the expiry time.
- v. to receive an update on the Fields off Beyton Road from Mid Suffolk's Enforcement Officer – noted email from Susan Francis – give summary
- vi. To receive a comment from Mid Suffolk Planning Department on the Outstanding Planning Applications facing Thurston – noted email from John Pateman Gee re Planning Issues – feedback – hoped that advice from MSDC for those submitting such applications will be pro-active.

b. Neighbourhood Plan:

- i. to receive an update from the NP Steering Group on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan – all documents had been written that need to be written: Transport, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure. The Co-Chairs of the Group had reviewed documents and they had now been submitted to the Parish Council's Professional Partner. He will substantively write the document and integrate policies etc. in planning terms. Almost at the end of significant work that the Steering Group has carried out. As soon as approved, after referendum, it will carry much more weight and has to be taken into account as a statutory document. A significant amount of work has been carried out and all are looking to complete this as soon as possible.
- ii. to receive a recommendation from the NP Steering Group on the site to be considered as most suitable for a new primary school (choice between Persimmon or Pigeon sites) – the NPT reported that it would support a school on the Pigeon Site, albeit with a recommendation for certain factors to be taken into account, and as such made a recommendation to the PC as to the reasons behind this support – the Chair reminded the meeting that it had made a fairly short judgement at the Referrals Committee Meeting stating that this site (Pigeon) was its preferred site. The question for the Parish Council was – do we want to remain with this train of thought and still support this? It was agreed, by a unanimous decision (with 1 abstention) that the PC on behalf of the parish would continue to support this site as its preferred site in line with the NPT's recommendation.

When questioned the representative from Pigeon stated that the arrangement was for a 3-hectare school site in line with approved outline planning permission which had a parameters plan which shows where the school will be sited. There is an option agreement for SCC purchase the land for the school and secure it for a school. SCC will secure both options for a school site to be able to draw down one site or the other. SCC are looking for an informal view from stakeholders.

c. Recreation Ground Trust:

- i. The accounts to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were presented to Council and accepted by all. The schedule of the accounts detailing income received, accounts paid since the last meeting and accounts awaiting payment, was presented to the Council and agreed by all present – see Appendix 11c ii) at the end of the minutes for full details.
- ii. The Council received the bank reconciliation to date and noted that bank balances stood at £2216.53 with cleared balances being £2056.34. The Budget to Actual for the period ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 showed that expenditure was now 8% over budget with income being under at 28%. It was noted that the invoice outstanding for the period September – December had now been settled by Norwich City RFP. Rec. Grd. Cttee. There would be a meeting of the Recreational Ground Committee at the end of the month. Agreement was forthcoming that quotes should be sourced for the mole hill works at Heath Rd. It was noted that a meeting was still to be arranged to discuss minor repairs / issues with play area providers.

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- iii. To receive any matters coming forth – invoices for the final quarter of the year for use of the pavilion would be raised at the end of the month.

d. Library Account:

- i. The accounts for the period ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were presented to full Council and accepted by all. Bank balances were confirmed as £10,254.19 with available funds being £9,792.01. The Locality Fund payment was also confirmed as having been received.
- ii. The schedule of the accounts paid since the last meeting, monies received and those accounts awaiting payment was presented to the Council and noted by all present – see Appendix 11dii at the end of the minutes for full details.
- iii. To receive any matters coming forth – the meeting was informed that they were still looking at the Children’s Library area and designs were being worked up. A milestone had been reached in that the library is being used every day of the week irrespective of whether the library is open or not. Numbers using the library have also increased.
- e. Emergency Plan – current version needs updating. It was agreed that Cllrs. Hasler and Masters would look into this and ascertain the work required.
- f. Skate Park Steering Group – 1<sup>st</sup> meeting had been held which had included the Strategic Leisure Advisor from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council. No-one was in attendance to provide an update on Plum Pudding Field, however it was noted that there were certain issues that needed to be discussed further such as access to the site; footpath; entrances; sale of land or lease or donation. It was confirmed that representatives would be attending the next Rec. Ground Committee Meeting scheduled for the end of March to discuss location of the skatepark on the Rec. Ground. A further Steering Group meeting has been arranged.
- g. Councillors’ Activities since the last meeting:
  - Library – Cllrs. Fawcett & Mrs O’Connell
  - PC Highways Speed Limit Meetings – Cllrs. Dashper, Hasler, Masters, Mrs Morris; Mrs O’Connell & Rainbow
  - Community Engagement Surgery – Cllrs. Masters & Rainbow
  - Meeting with Strategic Leisure Advisor MSDC – Cllr. Fawcett
  - NP Meetings – Cllrs. Fawcett & Mrs O’Connell
  - NP Chair Meetings – Cllr. Fawcett
  - Meeting with Hopkins Homes – Reserved Matters – Cllrs. Dashper, Hasler, Masters, Mrs Morris; Mrs O’Connell & Rainbow
  - CiL Workshop – Cllrs. Master and Mrs Morris
  - Thurston Community College Forum – Cllrs. Masters & Mrs O’Connell
  - Policy & Resources Committee – Cllrs. Dashper, Fawcett, Mrs O’Connell & Rainbow
  - Internal Control audit – Cllr. Rainbow
  - VAS – Cllrs. Hasler and Masters
  - Cavendish Hall AGM – Cllr. Moss
  - Skatepark Steering Group – Cllr. Dashper
- ii. Councillors’ Reports on village issues arising:
  - Rubbish – beyond the built-up area – rubbish on the roads out of the village – Pakenham via the Creamery, Orchard Road, Oak Road.
  - Glass deposited – on route Sustrans 51 down to the bridge parallel to the area behind Cavendish Close and St Peter’s Close where the trees have been removed
  - Telephone Box – Barton Road – what is happening with this box. JM going to ascertain state of box and report back to the Clerk.
  - Bus Shelter – School Road – needs cleaning – perhaps add to the list for the Forge Church?

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**12. CLERKS REPORT**

- a) Delegated powers – several issues relating to potholes (in particular along School Road, Barton Road, Beyton Road) have yet again been flagged up to SCC Highways Department at Rougham. The Clerk has now obtained the draft letters issued by SCC Highways with relation to trees and hedgerows and is in the process of adapting them for the Parish Council's use.
- b) To receive an update on the deployment of the VAS – further data collected was acknowledged. The data for the period when the VAS was deployed at Beyton Road and Barton Road was shared with the meeting. For the period 16<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 on Barton Road (travelling into the village, 21,958 vehicles passed the device with over 10,881 travelling more than 33+ miles per hour. 90 of these vehicles were in excess of 53+ miles per hour. The Clerk confirmed that this would be added to the data collected for this year for onward submission to the Safety Enforcement Team for advice on further appropriate traffic calming measures.
- c) There was no further general correspondence to deal with as all necessary items had been dealt with else-where or had been passed onto Councillors previously and Council was reminded of the upcoming Councillor Surgery later that week.

**13. TO CONSIDER SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA** – there were no specific items raised.

**14. CLOSE OF MEETING** – There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.10pm.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Annual Parish Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March commencing at 8.00pm in the Cavendish Hall; the next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018 commencing at 7.30pm in Thurston Community Library, Norton Road, Thurston

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## Appendix A

### 9 Financial Matters

<i>a) Accounts agreed for payment</i>	CHQ/DD/CC	NETT	VAT	TOTAL
SCC – Street Lighting	3412	4843.78	968.76	5812.54
M&TJ's – undergrowth on Station Hill	3413	375.00	75.00	450.00
SAC-O-MAT UK Ltd – Bio Dog Waste Bags	3414	272.74	54.54	327.28

<i>b) Accounts paid since the last meeting –</i>				
Plusnet – Telephone – February	DD	30.53	6.11	36.63
New Green Community Trust – rent February	SO	360.00		360.00
Salaries – February 2018	3408-3411	2513.29		2513.29
Thurston PO – Refreshments – meetings/office	CC	10.81	0.37	11.18
Microsoft – Office 365	CC	112.80	22.56	135.36
Eurooffice – Stationary	CC	55.98	11.20	67.18

<i>c) Receipts received since the last meeting –</i>				
Lloyds – Interest	Interest	3.55		3.55

#### 11a Planning:

ii) To note the following decisions coming forth:

Permission for erection of a self-contained granny annexe @ 27 Oakey Field Road

Non-material amendment to DC/17/04846 re change of colours to window and planking @ 1 Heath Road

Refusal of planning permission for erection of 2 no dwellings @ Plots 8 & 9, land off Cedars Close

Planning Permission for erection of single storey side extension @ 15 Birch Road

Consent for works to trees @ 4 Cedars Close

Refusal of Outline Planning Permission for the erection of up to 4 No dwellings @ Harveys Garden Plants, Great Green

#### 11c Rec Ground Accounts

*i) Accounts paid since the last meeting:*

None				
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*Monies received since the last meeting:*

Returned cheque – xref cheque 567	Chq	800.00	0.00	800.00
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*ii) Accounts awaiting payment:*

PC of Thurston – replacement cheque for loan	570	800.00	0.00	800.00
R Cook – Caretaker Contract	571	107.25	0.00	107.25
M&TJ's – Hedgerow Maintenance	572	390.00	78.00	468.00

#### 11d Library Accounts

*i) Monies received since the last meeting:*

MSDC – Locality Fund	Bacs	2000.00	0.00	2000.00
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*Accounts awaiting payment:*

Suffolk Cloud – website hosting	113	100.00	0.00	100.00
P Robinson - Vistaprint – tickets	1147	22.74	4.55	27.29

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018



## Appendix B

### Glossary of Common Abbreviations used

aif	All in favour
BACS	Bankers Automated Clearing Services
BUAB	Built Up Area Boundary
CC	Credit Card
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
Chq.	Cheque
Cllr.	Councillor
Cttee.	Committee
DC	District Council
DD	Direct Debit
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
LAIS (from SALC)	Local Association's Information Services
LGBCE	Local Government Boundary Commission for England
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MSDC	Mid Suffolk District Council
NHS	National Health Service
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
PC	Parish Council
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
pdf	Portable Document Format
Rec.	Recreation
RFO	Responsible Financial Officer
SALC	Suffolk Association of Local Councils
SCC	Suffolk District Council
SID	Speed Indicator Device
SNT	SaferNeighbourhood Team
SO	Standing Order
SPS	Suffolk Preservation Society
TCC	Thurston Community College
TNPSG	Thurston Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
VAS	Vehicle Activated Sign

So signed by the Chairman at the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## Appendix C –

### County Cllr. Otton's February Report to Full Council

**Obviously, the big storey has been the BEAST FROM THE EAST! I'm sure there have been numerous problems with the snow and road closures. Hopefully most will now be cleared, however there will be a back log for any works that had been scheduled. I am meeting with mark Stevens on Monday to get a face to face discussion on the highways contract.**

#### **Budget for 2018-19 confirmed**

On Thursday 8 February, the Council met to debate the budget proposals for 2018-19. As I explained in my previous report, the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group were concerned by a number of the proposed cuts. These included a £12m cut to adult care, funding reductions for Citizens Advice and Trading Standards, and cuts to rural bus services. Therefore, we were unable to support the budget.

#### **Concerns raised over accountability and transparency of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Board**

The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Board (SPSLB) is made up of council leaders and chief executives from across Suffolk, as well as the PCC, chief fire officer and representatives from Suffolk's Clinical Commissioning Groups. The SPSLB controls a large pot of money, made up of £7.447m from the Suffolk business rates pool and £3.23m of central government funding received as part of the Transformation Challenge Award.

At the end of January, we met with the Interim Chief Executive at Suffolk County Council to query why there is so little accountability within the SPSLB. I have been informed that, on the basis of our queries, the SPSLB will be reconsidering its governance arrangements. I will keep you informed of any further updates.

#### **Next phase of "Raising the Bar" strategy announced**

The Cabinet has approved the Raising the Bar 2018-20 strategy. This is the third phase of the programme, which began in 2012 and is focused on improving educational standards throughout Suffolk. The new strategy will focus on three priorities:

1. Exceptional leadership and governance across the education sector
2. Excellence in teaching and learning, driven by system led improvement and innovation
3. The best opportunities for every child and young person

The strategy includes the not very ambitious goal to place the education system in Suffolk among the top 25% nationally. However, as I said, if the transport proposal goes through will this NOT lower the bar!!

**Consultation on School Transport;** this has now ended. I have sent the clerk my group's official response.

#### **Suffolk to set up an outcomes-based contract to support adolescents on the edge of care**

Suffolk's Cabinet has agreed to set up a new outcomes-based contract, to provide intensive therapeutic support for adolescents at the edge of care via a private service provider.

The contract will be funded by a Social Impact Bond: this means that private investors will provide the start-up capital and running costs for the service, and will receive a return on investment if the service is successful at keeping children out of care

I am concerned about the use of a payment by results contract when vulnerable children are involved, given the risk of putting profit ahead of the wellbeing of these children.

#### **New drone technology for managing blue light service incidents**

On 15 February, it was announced that emergency services across Suffolk would have access to two Small Unmanned Surveillance Aircrafts. The technology, commonly referred to as drones, has been developed and funded by Suffolk Resilience Forum for use across the county.

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As part of a multi-agency Air Support Unit, the drones will be used by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue and Norfolk & Suffolk 4x4 Response. The drones will provide a range of aerial surveillance options to support these emergency services and voluntary organisations.

#### **Update on Ipswich's Upper Orwell Crossings**

Suffolk County Council have announced the preferred alignments of Ipswich's Upper Orwell Crossings. The main crossing is proposed to connect to the existing highway at the Rapier Street roundabout on Wherstead Road, west of the river, and at a new junction, north of Cliff Lane on Holywells Road, east of the river. The bridge crosses the river at an angle and incorporates an opening section over the navigation channel. The second crossing will provide a new vehicular link to the Wet Dock Island site and is proposed to be accessed from Felaw Street. The third crossing is a refurbishment of the existing swing bridge over the lock for use by cyclists and pedestrians.

A public information day will be held on 6 March between 12-7pm in the ground floor foyer of Dance East. This will be a drop-in event and a chance to ask any questions about the project.

**A14** I have asked Highways England to get the eastbound slip road sign reinstated.

**Rough Sleepers** I've asked the chief fire officer if the manned fire stations in Bury and Ipswich could be used as emergency shelters when the temperature drops below zero. He has agreed to look into this. This is done in other counties.

**Station Entrance and Crossing;** whilst investigating the state of the road entrance into the car park area, which is appalling! I have passed onto SCC, I had an interesting chat with a person re-painting the station, who appeared to have more useful ideas than Network rail, including how they dealt with the crossing at Halesworth.