

**MINUTES OF KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 8 JUNE 2015 IN KERSEY VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM**

PRESENT

John Hume – Chair, John Maltby, Veronica Partridge, Iqbal Alam, Ian Fidell, Alan Ferguson – Babergh District Councillor, 14 members of the public and the Clerk – Sarah Partridge.

The Chair welcomed Alan Ferguson to his first Kersey Parish Council meeting. Alan is the newly elected Babergh District Councillor for the South Cosford Ward, which includes Kersey.

76/15 APOLOGIES were received and accepted from Yvonne Martin and Giles Hollingworth.

77/15 CO-OPTION TO FILL THE VACANCY FOR ONE PARISH COUNCILLOR

Interest in becoming a Parish Councillor had been expressed by Ian Fidell, Councillors resolved to co-opt Ian onto the Parish Council. Ian was welcomed onto the Council and completed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Councillor.

78/15 ACCEPT MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A query was raised by a Councillor about the interpretation of the Code of Conduct and the Localism Act regarding Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and the need for a neighbour to have to declare a DPI when discussing a planning application. The Clerk advised that in all the training and advice she had read and received a neighbour would always have to declare a DPI, leave the meeting room and take no part in discussions. The Councillor believes this advice may be incorrect and the Clerk was asked to seek further advice. Iqbal Alam agreed to follow the advice of the Clerk on this occasion and declared a DPI in the planning application B/15/00039/FHA The Keep, Priory Hill because he is a neighbour.

**79/15 CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS
RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS – None received**

80/15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2015 were signed and dated as being correct.

81/15 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

B/15/00220/ROC Kersey Mill, Hadleigh Road - Application under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to vary condition 6 attached to PP B/07/00328/FUL – To extend the hours of operation from 0700hrs - 2300hrs to 0700hrs – 0030hrs. Babergh District Council has granted permission for this change of hours, with some conditions attached.

B/15/00039/FHA The Keep, Priory Hill – Erection of rear gable extension along with conversion and extension of existing garage, new swimming pool and carport and store. As amended by agent's email dated 3 April 2015 and revised plans 1051/04A, 05A and 08A as further amended by agents email dated 5 May 2015 and revised plans 1051/04B, 05B and 08B.

Iqbal Alam declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this planning application and left the meeting room. The meeting was adjourned to receive comments from members of the public. The applicant highlighted a few points about the proposals including that the footprint of the property will remain the same as existing, the pitch of one section of the roof will be altered which will slightly raise the height of the building but it would be lower than the height of the main building. The applicant is aware of the concerns regarding the visual impact the property has on the Conservation Area and is keen to tone down the colour and make other changes so it fits in better. Plans they are considering include natural oak weatherboarding and fitting new more suitable and uniform windows. Regarding the bright colour roof tiles he is investigating alternative tiles but the cost of re-roofing may prove to be prohibitive. However, he believes the colour has faded since they purchased the property. There were no other comments. The meeting was reconvened.

Councillors had carried out a site visit to The Keep to gain a better understanding of the proposals. Councillors discussed the application and amendments which now include that the two balconies will be Juliet style balconies. Previously the Parish Council had not supported proposed development at The Keep. Having looked at the amended plans and visited the site Councillors had realised that the footprint of the building would not be bigger than existing, which had been a previous concern. Councillors discussed other concerns, particularly in relation to the visual impact on the Conservation Area and were reassured by the applicant's proposals to tone down the property and make it more in keeping with the Conservation Area. A concern was raised about noise from the swimming pool. Following more discussion Councillors agreed to support the amended proposals but the Parish Council is still concerned by the visual impact the property has on the Conservation Area. It was agreed the Parish Council wish for conditions to be attached to any permission granted which would ensure the property is toned down so that it is more sympathetic and in keeping with the surrounding medieval village and Conservation Area. Councillors agreed that it had been helpful to visit the site so they were fully informed. The applicants were thanked for attending the meeting to answer questions about their application.

Iqbal Alam re-joined the meeting. Four members of the public left the meeting.

B/15/00036/FHA Elm Lodge, Wickerstreet Green – Erection of cart lodge with storage/office over (existing barn and woodshed to be demolished).

The meeting was adjourned to receive comments from members of the public. The applicant highlighted a few points about the proposals including that the existing barn was not big enough to park cars inside. The proposal is for 2 bays for parking and 1 bay for storage with office/storage above. The building would be roofed in slate to match the existing house. There were no other comments. The meeting was reconvened.

Councillors looked at the plans and documentation and discussed the proposals. It was agreed to fully support this application.

One member of the public left the meeting.

82/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – None

The meeting was adjourned for 'Parish Time' but there were no points raised.

Alan Ferguson our new Babergh District Councillor was welcomed and invited to introduce himself to the Parish Council and members of the public present. Following a career as an RAF pilot Alan worked for a national youth organisation in Scotland and Ireland and then worked for Serco mainly dealing with defence contracts. Alan and his wife moved to Suffolk about 10 years ago to be closer to family members. Alan won his seat in a very close election where South Cosford has one of the highest turnouts in the District. Alan said that he sees himself as having two roles, one as a part of the Conservative group at the District Council where the Conservatives have a majority for the first time. The political group are keen to revisit lots of situations and hope to make changes for the better. Alan has been appointed to the Strategy Committee where they will be looking at the role of Babergh and Mid Suffolk over the coming 4, 10 and 20 years. One major decision will be the office location for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council and officers. Austerity will mean that changes will need to be made. The other role Alan sees is for him to represent and support his parishes which he sees as non-political. He plans to attend as many Parish Council meetings as possible so he can get to know councils and is happy to be contacted so matters can be raised where his support and help is needed. He passed a copy of his District Councillor report to the Clerk, which is appended to these minutes. The meeting was reconvened.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.28pm.

There are 2 sheets appended to these minutes.

Alan Ferguson's Babergh District Councillor report.

REPORT TO KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 8rd June 2015

ALAN FERGUSON (DISTRICT COUNCILLOR FOR SOUTH COSFORD)

Introduction

I apologise for not being able to join you for the Parish Council meeting on 11th May, but we are away on a pre-arranged break in Hereford for a few days to visit an elderly work colleague – arranged before I was nominated for the District Councillor's role.

What news so far in these very early days? As expected there will be a review of many aspects of Babergh Council business now that the Conservatives have a significant majority in the Council for the first time in its history. For what it's worth, the same does not apply to Mid Suffolk as they already have a Conservative majority and little is expected to change in that context. I must stress though that it's far too early to see what the outcome of any review(s) might bring but some changes should be expected.

On a personal note, I have now completed most of the District Councillor acquaint courses that are provided by the Councils and I have only praise for the time and thought that has gone into them. Now the real work begins.

Having attended my first full Council meeting on 19th May 15, we do not have another full Babergh Council meeting until 28th July 15. Various Committees (Strategy, Planning etc) are now meeting regularly again with their new membership, and I will update you when key issues are decided. Some recent examples/outcomes that may be of interest are:

1. Tenants of Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils who would like to buy their own homes could be a step closer following the launch of a new scheme last month called "HomeOwn". The 2 Councils have successfully applied for funding from the Govt's £84M Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund. The scheme enables local authorities to make one-off payments to council tenants up to £20,000 as a cash incentive to buy property for the first time. The 2 year scheme is aimed at those who are eligible for the "right to buy scheme" and wish to buy property on the open market. The scheme is open to 10 tenants in Babergh & 10 in Mid Suffolk.
2. All council house tenants now have the opportunity to have solar panels fitted to their roofs at no cost to them. Electricity generated is free to tenants with the "surplus" power generated being fed in to the National grid.
3. In the property ownership context, there are potentially some other challenging measures to implement. For example, the new Conservative Govt has decided that Housing Association tenants should be given "right to buy" permission in the same way that Council house tenants may do so once they qualify for the scheme. There is water to go under the bridge before this becomes law, however, if it happens, the application of "right to buy" will be considerable more challenging with Housing Association properties.
4. Next, and whilst no location decisions have been taken, it looks increasingly likely that Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils will be co-located at some stage in the future if this is shown to be a cost-effective step in our closer working relationship with Mid Suffolk. This **does not** imply any intent to merge the two Councils. We now have an agreed Joint Strategic Plan that is being delivered between 2014 and 2019 that retains their independence.
5. Since the joint partnership was launched in 2011, the management resource has been reduced by almost 40% with no loss in output to the customer (us) and what we have achieved in Babergh/Mid Suffolk is seen nationally as a model for other Councils.

The Future

It would be naive of us not to expect further reductions in the Council's core funding over the next 3 years. However, Councils are expected to be offered more "incentivised funding" and we will be required to generate other revenue streams to fill the gaps.

Housing & the planning issues that this generates are clearly to become even more important in the next 4 years when our strategic housing targets are increased significantly from the already challenging "numbers". This is clearly an issue for villages like Kersey and to support you to the best of my ability I need to be fully conversant with every one of the planning applications and the potential issues that will occur. I have asked Babergh formally to be added to the distribution list for all planning applications in our Ward. As yet I do not have a response to that request, but it would be helpful if the Parish Council could let me know (email please) when you have received a notification from the Babergh Planners that comment is required.

Clearly there will be many and varied issues to be considered as Babergh moves forward with its Conservative majority. I will consult with and keep you in the picture as much as I possibly can.

Alan Ferguson