

SHOTLEY PENINSULA ALLIANCE OF PARISH COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting held at Berners Hall, Woolverstone at 7.30 p.m. on
Thursday 23rd January 2025

Present: John Ambrose (JA) (Holbrook). Robin Coates (RC) (Wherstead), Mike Crouch (MC) (Harkstead), Chris Leach (CL) (Stutton), Ian Melville (IM) (Chelmondiston), Simon Pearce (SP) (Woolverstone) John Richardson (JR) (Shotley), Rusell Ross-Smith (RR-S) (Freston), Jo Hazlewood (JH) (Clerk Holbrook and Freston PCs)

Apologies were received from Mal Bridgeman (Brantham)

1. Welcome and introductions – the meeting was Chaired by Simon Pearce who welcomed all to the meeting prior to introductions.

2. **Update from previous meeting:**

JH reported that there was no further update following her last email to members telling them that there had still been no response to the Planning Statement and accompanying letter. RC said the lighting issues at the new garage at Wherstead were ongoing.

RC reported that the change of the public right of way officer had produced some positive action. SP reported that the appeal following refusal of the application for a dog walking field on Freston Hil; has been withdrawn and the land had been sold to a local landowner.

Planning statement: Following the failure to get a response from the Planning Department to the Alliance's letter and planning statement, despite being submitted 3 times, it was agreed to write directly to the Chief Executive to raise a formal complaint, with a copy to the leader of the Council. Each District Councillor for the peninsula would be asked to add their concern about Babergh's failure to respond. JH will provide a draft letter within a week and circulate all members, giving members a week to comment. The letter of complaint would then be sent to the Chief Executive, giving him a deadline for comment by 28th February, adding a proviso that they should provide an alternative date if the 28th February. It was agreed to post a copy to the Chief Executive, as well using email

3. **Discussion re effects NPPF and possible effects on the Joint Local Plan.**

It was noted that there is a possibility that, as a result of the demands on the increased number of houses and sites, some ad hoc applications could end up going through. Babergh's Local plan may be another 3 or 4 years before being finalised. It was agreed that nothing can be done at the moment, apart from supporting each other and keeping a watchful eye on the situation..

4. **Devolution plans:** concerns were expressed that SCC have asked for devolution to be fast tracked and for elections to be deferred, adversely affecting the democratic process. It was agreed that the devolution agenda is will inevitably happen and there is little that Parish Councils could do. One of

the drawbacks for Parishes is access to the new Unitary councillors, whose job would be much bigger than their counterparts in the existing District and County Council structure and the important direct line of communication and dissemination of information may be lost. It was agreed that Parish Councils would need to keep their residents informed about developments.

Harkstead's Grapevine was cited as a good way of communicating and other parishes had a combination of social media forums, regular parish magazines and newsletters etc. It was acknowledged that there are some households without internet access or mobile phones and ensuring information was available to them was more problematic.

5. **Flooding on the Strand** – Stutton PC raised this as a problem for all the villages on the peninsula. One issue is that people seek alternative routes which are inappropriate for the volume of traffic and there seems to be no cohesive plans for organising safe alternative routes. Flooding is perceived to have got worse on The Strand over the years. JA publishes a list of dates in the Parish Magazine when flooding is likely to occur on the Strand. At the moment, there are 10 potential occasions in February and 11 in March. JA agreed to email dates to other members. It was understood that diversions have to be on the same category of roads. It was agreed to write to Highways as a group and cc County Councillor to ask for a meeting to find out what their long term plan is for the Strand and to ask if there could be better options for diversions, such as an electronic signpost. RC suggested writing to Paul West and he agreed to let JH have his contact details and to invite James Cartlidge along to the meeting.
6. **Freston Crossroads:** CL reported that in 2010 a roundabout was suggested as a solution for the safety of Freston Crossroads. At the time this was refused due to a lack of a speed limit, but now there is a speed limit, should this be re-visited? SP would circulate a document produced about Freston Crossroads around that time. There was some concern that Planning Conditions have been changed by Babergh on the Ganges application and JR agreed to check to see if there have been changes to the 106 contributions for improvements for Freston Crossroads. Following an FOI request, a resident of Freston suggested there had been 34 accidents in Freston over recent years. RC believed the number was probably greater. Accidents are only recorded on CrashMap if the emergency services are called out. The top of Freston Hill where the bus stops are situation, is particularly hazardous for pedestrians using the bus service. IM pointed out that the last 3 vehicles counts were carried out on the B1456 during school closures. It was agreed to add plans for Freston Crossroads to the suggested meeting with Highways, emphasising safety concerns.
7. **Next steps for The Alliance:** as detailed above – writing to the Chief Exec re the Alliance's Planning Statement and effecting a meeting with Highways to discuss plans for Flooding on the Strand, traffic diversion and the safety of Freston Crossroads, particularly in the light of increasing traffic.

8. **Any Other Business/Members updates:** JA reported that he had met with the new heads at The Academy and the RHS both of whom want the schools to be involved in the community. He also mentioned that he was pursuing setting up a CIC to try and get the peninsula sports centre open to the public. JR said that the drug dealing problems near the marina at Shotley had disappeared since the cameras and lights were installed.

RC: shared a problem with some land just before the houses towards the end of The Strand which contained a Pumping Station. The gate has disappeared and the land has been inundated with fly tipping. The land is privately owned and there has been dispute between the landowners and Anglian Water resulting in AW not being able to re-install the gates which would prevent future fly tipping.. There has now been a Community protection notice served on the owner from Babergh. Members were asked to share any helpful advice with RC.

MC: a TV programme called Slow Horses is being filmed in a house in Harkstead on 14th Feb for 3 weeks. There will be about 90 people on site every day, 9 permanent production trucks an 80 space car park, food trucks, porta loos, etc. This obviously could affect the volume of traffic through Holbrook, Lower Holbrook and Woolverstone. A one way system might be introduced to cope with volume and size of the traffic

SP: Ipswich High School offer some interesting opportunities to share with other schools on particular projects (a recent Oracy expert had been engaged) but these opportunities had not been taken up by any of the local schools. Any help in promoting these events to local schools would be helpful.

9. **Date of Next Meeting:** 17th April at Shotley, with the possibility of a prior meeting if a response was received from either Babergh or Highways. It was agreed that it would be really beneficial if a representative from each Council could attend the 17th April meeting.