

Minutes of Flixton Annual Parish Meeting

Held on 12th April 2022

At Flixton Village Hall

Present.

Cllr. Phillip Kidner (Chairman), Cllr. Justin Skinner, Cllr. David Mann, Cllr. Kenneth Warne and Cllr. Julie Hinsley. Brian Beales (Breedon Group), Sue Warne, Julie Mann, James Cracknell, Pete & Sue Madder-Smith, Malcolm Mackinnon, Chris Mac, Stuart & Karen Tilbury, Lin & Rich Smith, Sandra & Terry Hunt, John & Janice Reed, Susan Hall, Linda & Gary Doughty, Jason Lain

Apologies for Absence.

Kate Cracknell

Opening:

At 7.30 the Chairman opened the meeting by thanking all those attending.

Minutes of the previous meeting:

Were read and accepted. Proposed: Julie Mann, Seconded: Sue Warne.

Matters arising from the minutes:

It was noted that we continue to have potholes that needed repair and that the trimming of hedges and verges is not happening.

Chairman's report.

The Grouped Parish Council have met six times this year, some in person some by Zoom. Apart from planning, the council has been involved in replacing the broken post box and the solar speed camera, negotiations on the gravel pit footpath and Grange road Flixton. It has also been meeting with East Suffolk Community officer, assisting the River Waveney Trust's project to modernise effluent discharge in St Cross and St Margaret. The defibrillator pads at St Cross and St Margaret have been replaced. Even the hanging ash branch at Minster cottages has been sorted by East Suffolk Norse although it was on BT list from Feb2021. East Suffolk Norse has still some tree surgery to do in St Margaret. The biggest item on the agenda, now that UK power are burying the power lines and updating the connections in St Margaret is nearing completion. There is building and drainage of Grange Road Flixton. We have spent a lot of effort and time over several years to get to this stage, it involved our MP

Peter Aldous as well as County Councillor Judy Cloke and District Councillor David Richie. This should not be a stop gap job as it's entirely new drainage, bigger pipes, road widening and hopefully new haunching followed by new tarmac. We are told that the damaged roads will be repaired once the Grange Road is open. Parish councillors have also been sorting the refurbishment of the St Cross sign and fencing off the play area as well as organising Litter picks. I thought it was great, a fortnight ago, when not one McDonalds wrapper was found, that was until I remembered that the Gillingham outlet has been shut.

Thank you to my fellow councillors for their dedication and support, particularly Cllr David Mann who looks after the finances, and Cllr Ken Warne for his dogged persistence.

Flixton Parish Council Review

Firstly, thank you to all those who attended the litter pick on Saturday the 26th of March and thank you to Justin and his wife for supplying the refreshments at the end. It was very pleasant sitting outside the Village Hall, in the sunshine, having a chat.

The 2SFG did a litter pick in the same week above the just completed road works.

2SFG

John Gibson, the site manager at the 2SFG, has responded to our request to have a staff and lorry driver litter and speeding campaign at the factory. A sign has been issued to all employees re-iterating the need to be good neighbours and not speed or litter.

John further states that the Site Director would like us to know that he is committed to improving safety and the Speeding problem in Church Road.

2SFG have offered support for the Community Speed Watch if request.

Minor speeding infringements should be reported to John Gibson, so he can take appropriate action first and serious speeding is reported to the police.

2SFG are looking into replacing the notice at the 2SFG exit with caution advice for lorry drivers as they leave the site.

Business is good with a £3 million investment in the factory this year and a proposed 5 million next year which includes upgrading the effluent plant. Along with the drain improvements this should see an end to the Grange Road water problem.

As our employee numbers have increased to 625, 2SFG have put on 6 buses from Ipswich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, which has reduced the amount of traffic through the village and the amount of litter thrown from cars. When Grange Road is reopened, they will be continuing with litter picks.

Some Flixton employees are bringing Ukraine refugees into their homes, and the company are offering them work if needed.

2SFG would like to continue to support the village. Should more speed signs be needed or if you need a handyman to paint the village hall or any other odd jobs around the village, please let them know.

Monitoring the defibrillator

Thanks again go to Mrs Davison who has monitored and looked after the defibrillator for another year.

Other work

Throughout the year there has been the usual round of Council chasing to make sure that work on drains, culverts, bank cutting, pavement clearing, and pothole filling has been carried out. Our three main successes being the major drainage work in Grange Road, the return of the Church Road post-box and the repair of the permanent VAS in the Street.

Traffic control

Ken Warne has done a great deal of research into this over the previous few months after an initial request by Jason Lain, who lives in the Street and whose home is very near the road.

According to SCCH, the current road markings signs etc are adequate for Flixton.

That excludes the white lines on either side of Church Road, the 30mph roundels on the road at the entrances to the village, the permanent VAS in the Street and the 'watch your speed' sign near the old Post Office all of which were organised and paid for via the Parish Council.

If further traffic calming signs or road markings are required by the village there would be no financial assistance from SCCH. The money for any scheme would have to be found from County Councillor budgets, Parish Council precepts (both of which are limited) or from local businesses and private individuals. Both the 2SFG and the Breedon Group have shown interest in contributing.

The County Council will not support any alterations to signs either on the A143 or at the Halesworth (A144), Beccles (B1062) end of Bungay to reduce traffic passing through Flixton which remains Bungay's by-pass. They state that because of vehicles using Satnav it is unlikely that a change in signage would influence the route taken by vehicles to any great extent. Therefore, there will be no reduction in traffic through Flixton.

The police have told us that they cannot offer a solution. They do not have capacity locally for more speed enforcement and considered that there could be no further traffic calming without causing further noise and disruption. They do not intend to put up any more speed cameras in Suffolk. If a dummy speed camera is put up the installer would be liable if it caused an accident. They are saying that when residents moved into the Street in particular that they must have realised what the consequences would be of being next to a busy road. They will participate in Community Speed Watch (CSW) and the Automatic Number Plate Recognition Camera Project (ANPR). These may also encourage more visits to Flixton by the Police mobile speed camera vehicle.

SCCH states that if Flixton has had a visit by a mobile police speed camera, then we can have the camera signs on the B1062 covering the area where the camera was stationed. The area covered may affect the cost of installation. The decision will be down to the SCCH Asset team to agree installation and so it will need to be passed by them first if we wish to investigate this further.

Community Speed Watch (CSW). Needs a team of at least six people trained by the Police to be operated. Signs must be put out at either end of the area to be operated in. The police will

provide the necessary equipment. Anyone caught speeding can be reported to their employer and the police. The police will send out letters to the offenders and if they are persistent offenders, visit them. If the offences reported are numerous enough, they will send a mobile speed camera to the area. Terry Hunt has offered to start a CSW in Flixton so if you are interested, please contact him.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition Camera Project (ANPR).

This can be requested by the Parish Council and must be backed up by a County Councillor. The site will be assessed by an ANPR project officer and a traffic engineer. If the site is a TVAS location, then an ANPR device can be installed. The device will be in situ for a week. Speeding offenders will receive letters from SCC and Suffolk Constabulary. More than one offence will result in further Police action. Numerous offences could result in a SafeCam team being deployed to catch and prosecute offenders. If you feel that this would be useful the Parish Council will put the area chosen forward.

Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs) also known as Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs).

Permanent VASs such as the one on the B1062 as you enter Flixton going towards Bungay are not now considered by SCCH as being effective as drivers get used to them.

The Parish Council disagrees. In fact, SCCH wanted to remove our VAS as it had not been working in recent months. They cannot do this as it belongs to the Parish Council who have had it repaired. SCCH say that mobile VASs are only effective if they are moved as again drivers get used to them if they are in one position for too long. So, an additional VAS mobile or permanent is unlikely to be approved by SCCH but is still a possibility, in which case, we would advocate it being positioned at the Bungay end of the village or near the Village Hall. Cost: £1.5-3.5K.

Additional 30mph signs. The SCCH were asked if repeater 30mph roundels could be put on the streetlights between the village sign and the Buck and in Church Road. The reply was that Schedule 10 General Direction 2 prohibits having repeater signs within a system of street lighting and may prevent the Police from enforcing the speed limit. We will have to make do with our one quite effective rogue sign put up by a resident.

Speed cushions. These would not be supported by the SCCH on a B class road. They would also result in a noise problem for nearby residents.

Chicanes (also known as build outs). Are not supported by our County Councillors who do not consider them suitable for the Street as it is on a B road and the traffic is heavy.

Chicanes will only work if there is an even flow of traffic in each direction. They cannot be installed where the road has a double white line. This prevents one being placed at the Bungay end of the village. The only possible place for one is just before Holly Cottages at the Homersfield end of the village. Chicanes may cause additional braking noise due to vehicles having to give way. In the Street at the Homersfield end it could cause a traffic build up near a sharp bend. The design would have to accommodate a number of different vehicle sizes which increases the stagger length resulting in domestic vehicles being able to travel through the chicane at speed. Tightening the stagger length could result in lorries striking the build outs and getting stuck. The SCCH would not recommend build outs until the Parish Council had exhausted all other possible options including ANPR and CSW. The approval of the Asset Manager and Transport Strategy would be required. Cost: £35-45K each.

White gates. Placed on either side of the road with white lines to suggest road narrowing and incorporating a surface change. On the gates would be the Village sign and the 30mph roundels. They can only be placed at the position of the current 30mph signs.

This means that they would only really be effective at the Bungay end of the village as at the Homersfield end they would be too far away from the worst speeding area between the village sign and the Buck.

Cost: £8K.

Bend signs with accompanying SLOW markings on the road preceded and followed by a road surface change. The SLOW Road markings without the bend sign would be possible just before Holly Cottages at the Homersfield end of the village and the bend sign and SLOW road markings could be installed at the Bungay end of the village to some effect.

Cost £3k per unit.

In summary, the Community Speed Watch (CSW) definitely has the Parish Council's support and would like to see it operated in the Street as well as Church Road. Thank you, Terry, for taking it on. Please give him your support.

The Automatic Number Plate Recognition Camera Project (ANPR) also has merit and if you agree the Parish Council will put in an application.

Of the remaining traffic calming possibilities there is the white gates, another VAS, bend signs and SLOW on the road with surface changes and speed camera signs.

Now that the research has been done the best way forward would be to organise a subcommittee of affected residents to decide which of these options if any should be pursued and action those chosen including the organisation of finance, the Parish Council assisting where necessary.

Traffic calming discussion

Q. There was a traffic survey carried out. Do we know who the speeders are?

A. The survey states 30% of vehicles speeding. The consensus of those present was that it was 'white vans' and factory employees

It was suggested that 2SFG give a health & safety induction on driving through the village.

It was thought that the CSW should be operated in the Street & Church Road and that any offenders' details should be also reported to 2SFG.

Q. Do we have to use the office highways signs and gates as they are expensive?

A. Ken Warne – Yes.

Q. Would a pedestrian crossing be a possibility?

A. Ken Warne will make enquiries.

Open Forum

A discussion was had about the footpath along the Street to the Buck. Ken will see if it is a possibility to move the path a few feet further away from the highway on safety grounds. Failing that, whether we could form a work party to clear the path ourselves.

The bus shelter looks to need some maintenance.

There are 2 streetlights not working on Church Road.

A streetlight was broken near the Buck and electrical wires were exposed.

It was suggested that a mirror at the bottom of St Felix would aid safety.

Also suggested was the provision of a bin for dog waste in Church Road.

There is a broken drain that requires maintenance in The Street.

Brian stated that he would investigate any speeding lorries that we reported to him. He needs the registration number, date & time.

It was agreed that we would see if we can find out the number of traffic calming measures that have been carried out locally.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Signed.....Chairman.