

REDGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING – MINUTES 1 December 2021
Held at Redgrave Activities Centre at 7.30pm

Present: Brian Andrews, Mike Denmark, John Giddings, Frank Gillett, Ann Preston, Netty Verkroost, Andy Warnes, the Parish Clerk and 31 members of the public.

1. Apologies received: Jason Walker
2. Casual Vacancies: There were no applications for the vacancy on the Parish Council.
3. Declarations of interest: None.
4. Minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2021 were agreed as a true record.
5. Progress reports not covered on agenda: None.
6. Public Forum: The RAT reiterated its assertion that the Local Green Space (LGS) designation should be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan or the Recreation Ground facilities would be lost.

Councillors explained the PC's current intentions – outlined in item 8.1 – and also spoke about a letter received from the Llanover Estate on the day of the meeting. The letter reiterated the Estate's plans for development but there was no suggestion that a removal of the LGS would mean a return to the previous leased state of the Recreation Ground. The PC felt strongly that there were more potential solutions on a scale from worst-case, i.e. the loss of all facilities and a return of the site to agricultural land, to a community compromise on the scale of development in order to secure future use of the site. The Llanover Estate had made three overtures so far, first in 2017 with a proposal for a large development on the site and adjacent fields; again in a submission to the Neighbourhood Plan call for sites for 70 houses, which was rejected by the community, the Neighbourhood Plan group, Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) and the Plan advisors AECOM; and most recently a proposal of up to 32 houses - a Phase 1 of 20 houses through 2037 and a Phase 2 of up to 12 houses, culminating in the transfer of 7 acres of land for a football pitch, play area and community building into village ownership. The PC felt that there was room for further negotiation on the number of houses and the point at which the land came into village ownership.

The Neighbourhood Plan group spoke about consultation with the community, reminding everyone that they had carried out a survey of 250 houses, spoken to everyone on their doorsteps and in the 200 replies to the survey there had been a general dislike of building on the site. However, residents had also called for affordable housing and bungalows and in the call for sites the Recreation Ground had been identified as the most likely site for development. It was pointed out that the LGS designation would not prevent building on the site, but a strong justification would be needed and the LGS would give the village more control over the process if the Plan passed referendum. An undertaking to then review the Plan would put the village in a good position, retaining the Plan's weight in planning law. If the Plan was paused now to remove the LGS, it would go back to a point in the process where it had no weight in planning law and the village would not benefit from its protection. MSDC also agreed with this assessment and supported the inclusion of the LGS. It had in fact been included on MSDC's recommendation as this would align with their designation of the site as Open Space within the Joint Local Plan.

Councillors responded that the Llanover Estate had every chance to put forward objections to the LGS at the Regulation 16 stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process when something could have been done without a significant loss of time and effort. Ultimately, the Estate could do what they wanted with the site as it was their private property and if they returned it to agricultural use, this might call into question the validity of the LGS. However, it could also reduce the value of the land, lose goodwill within the community and jeopardise the development of 8 houses allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. MSDC had more potential housing supply than required at present and Redgrave had already met their requirements on other sites, so technically the 8 houses were not needed.

Members of the public expressed concern about the loss or reduction of facilities and that the RAT would have an expensive obligation to return the site to pre-lease state if the situation could not be resolved. There were also significant concerns about the stress on already overloaded infrastructure and the traffic situation on The Churchway if increased development took place on site. However, it was also felt that the community would have to accept that it could not retain all 13 acres for recreational use but might still retain what it needed. Some agreed that the proposal to review the

Plan following referendum was a step toward resolving the issues while preserving the Plan's protection. Finally, members of the public stressed that it was important for the PC to reach a consensus with the RAT and the Neighbourhood Plan group. Conflicting positions had made it very difficult for residents to get a grasp on what was happening and anything that looked like a rift within the community would hurt its position in negotiations with the Llanover Estate.

Councillors responded that efforts to engage had been and would continue to be made and any proposal by the groups involved in the negotiations would have to be approved by the rest of the community.

7. Planning: *To include any applications received after the publication of the agenda.*

7.1 Applications: None.

7.2 Decisions from Mid Suffolk District Council: None.

8. Ongoing Items:

8.1 Redgrave Recreation Ground: Members of the Parish Council had met to obtain advice from the Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) and MSDC. They proposed that the best option was to take the Plan to Referendum next year as planned, as approval of the Plan at Referendum would provide Redgrave with an important level of protection against future development. However, it was suggested that the Parish Council would initiate an immediate review of the Plan afterwards to incorporate any agreement that might be made with Llanover regarding the use of its land holdings. This review would include as full a consultation with residents as undertaken with the existing Plan. The PC agreed that this was the best way forward and would continue discussions with the Llanover Estate along these lines.

8.2 Neighbourhood Plan: It was noted that the next step was for MSDC to issue a decision statement on the modifications to the Plan following Examination and this decision statement was required to include a date for the Referendum. MSDC had agreed to postpone this deadline to 31 January 2022 to allow the PC to hold further discussions with the Llanover Estate but had emphasised that the deadline could not be extended further.

8.3 Lorry Route Review: It was noted that the Lorry Count had been held on 15 November and had unfortunately been affected by roadworks on the A1066. However, it had produced some helpful information about the type of traffic on the B1113, noting that the percentage of lorries driving straight through the village from the direction of Botesdale directly to the A1066 at South Lopham was 31%. The percentage of lorries using the village as a 'rat run' from the direction of South Lopham was 36%. An additional late-night count had revealed 2-3 lorries going through post-midnight and 7-9 lorries going through the village from 4:30am-8am. This information would be added to the response to the Suffolk County Council review. The next step for the local campaign would be to investigate damage to Listed Buildings on The Street. The PC thanked the volunteers who had participate in the Lorry Count and particularly thanked Mike Hall for all his work leading the campaign.

8.4 Village Pond: Following local advice that dredging was not needed, it was agreed to shelve the plans for now.

8.5 Old School Playing Field: The group formed to review the future use of the field had presented two preferred options – a broadleaf woodland or a community orchard – at the November PC meeting. Since the last meeting, they had met the Sicon Foundation who had agreed in principle to supply and plant trees free of cost on the site in Autumn 2022. Sicon had advised that some prep work was needed, and advice would be taken on how to achieve this. The group would also be asking for village volunteers to get involved during the planting. More work had been done to establish the boundaries of the site and it was agreed to delineate this through hedging this year if possible. The Tree Warden would look at the availability and suitability of hedging trees. MSDC had also offered trees and this would be considered as a back-up to Sicon's offer. MSDC had advised that the site was within a Special Landscape Area and they would consult with their Tree Officer about the work. Finally, there were plans to meet Suffolk Wildlife Trust on site for further advice.

8.6 Old Allotments: The Sicon Foundation had also visited this site and provisionally said yes to providing trees. The boundaries needed to be set out, possibly with hedging, as it was in the middle of another field. Suffolk Wildlife Trust would visit this site too.

8.7 Clerk Recruitment: It was noted that the advertisement had gone on the Suffolk Association of Local Councils website with a closing date of 10 January 2022.

9. New Items:

10. Correspondence:

11. Finance:

11.1 Account balance: £ 33,884.41

Income: £ 0.00

11.2 Accounts for Payment:

Admin Payments £ 438.86 Not itemised due to GDPR

Compass Point £ 740.00 Neighbourhood Plan Consultant

RESOLVED, with all agreed, to approve payment of the accounts above.

11.3 Draft Budget 2022-23: The tax base information was noted and the budget discussions would be concluded in January.

12. Matters carried forward from this meeting or to be brought to the attention of the council: The group dealing with the Old School Playing Field and Old Allotments were also looking at the possibility of a Jubilee avenue of oaks from Redgrave to Botesdale. They would be contacting the landowner. The PC thanked the Chairman for his superb renovation of the bench at the village pond.

13. New matters for next meeting: None.

14. Next meeting: 12 January 2022

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.03pm.