

BIRDBROOK, HELIONS BUMPSTEAD, STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD and STURMER PARISH COUNCILS' NETWORK GROUP

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Wednesday 9th November 2016 at Helions Bumpstead Village Hall

PRESENT:

Birdbrook:

Alan Cook
Martin Gilbert
Richard Walker

Helions Bumpstead:

Neville Nicholson (Chair)
Jane Catchesides
Sue Cunningham

Steeple Bumpstead:

Frank Aldred
June Argent

Sturmer:

Elizabeth Naylor
Alan Carter
Kate McLeod-Jones
David Porth

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Neville Nicholson welcomed all to the Meeting, and members introduced themselves.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH APRIL

The Minutes were agreed, subject to clarification on the attendance list.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Diana Garrod (District Councillor), Debbie Shaw (UKIP candidate) and Tony Evans (Clerk, HB)

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The parish representatives present at the previous Meeting had reported back to their respective Councils, and it was **agreed** that all wished to proceed with the Network Group.

It was **agreed** that the Network Group provided a valuable forum for members to share information and to discuss issues common to all the parishes.

Our position on the northern edge of Essex, close to the borders with Suffolk and Cambridge, created significant common problems.

5. HIGHWAYS

Major Roads: A1017

Birdbrook updated the Group on the speeding issues on the A1017 between Sturmer and Ridgewell, and the lack of response from ECC Highways – not even an acknowledgement of their correspondence. Similar lack of response from David Finch.

Various ways of moving this forward were discussed, and ideas suggested included:

1. Keep the correspondence going. Write again demanding a reply.
2. Hold a Public Meeting, inviting Highways to attend
3. Consult the ombudsman, suggesting Highways not fit for purpose

4. Start Facebook and Twitter campaign, and try to get help from *brake* and *fixmystreet*.

Helions Bumpstead offered their support in this. The inconsistency of speed limits was a common issue.

Minor Roads:

Helions Bumpstead highlighted the erosion of roadside verges and rat runs through the village from Steeple Bumpstead to Cambridge. Lack of footpaths for pedestrians was a common problem

Birdbrook has a problem with delivery vehicles using tiny lanes because of sat-nav misdirection. *HB* suggested perhaps alter postcodes to redirect traffic (Pinpoint, commercial disadvantage to non-PO deliveries if postcodes are confusing). This had worked successfully in HB.

6. COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT STACKING

The increased volume of traffic through Stansted Airport had led to an increase in stacking over *Helions Bumpstead* this summer. Planes are turning over the village, are very low and causing significant noise nuisance.

Sturmer had also noticed an increase in traffic. *Birdbrook* are at the end of the Thaxted flight approach.

A phone app that allows tracking of flights was discussed.

It was suggested that a representative from Stansted Airport might be invited to a future meeting, but we need more definite data to present to them.

7. PLANNING AND HOUSE BUILDING IN RURAL AREAS

At the last meeting, it had been suggested that a Neighbourhood Plan for the Network Group of villages might be a way forward.

Birdbrook reported that they had discussed this idea with Jan Stobart of RCCE, but had been advised that unless we actively wanted any development in the area, it would not be useful. The cost is prohibitive, at about £20,000 to produce – so only viable for small towns.

Helions Bumpstead had received similar advice a few years ago.

Steeple Bumpstead reported on the huge development plan submitted by Gladmans on Finchingfield Road. The initial plan for 95 houses had been rejected by BDC, but a reduced plan for 65 houses is now being considered. Gladmans have appealed, and fighting this is going to be very expensive for the village. Figures of £30,000+ have been mentioned.

Support for SBPC from the other villages was offered.

Sturmer have major concerns about the new development behind Haverhill golf course, with plans for 2,500 new dwellings just across the county border. The flood risk is a real threat, as *Sturmer* is the lowest point with the river running through it, and is prone to flooding anyway.

Sturmer also raised the plan to build a 48MW standby generator on the Essex side of Haverhill, close to the A1017 *Sturmer* roundabout. This would be used to take up the slack when solar or wind generators are down. The 24 9metre chimneys would be used at night, and would create a significant noise nuisance.

HBPC offered to support *Sturmer's* objection, and to share information about their successful fight against the wind turbine.

A letter to Haverhill Town Clerk, asking for information sharing on similar applications that have considerable cross-county implications, was **agreed**.

8. POTENTIAL BOUNDARY CHANGES BETWEEN ESSEX AND SUFFOLK

The Haverhill Forum meeting and BDC have confirmed that there are no plans to change the existing boundary at present.

Only the Boundary Commission has the power to make changes, and they are concentrating on Parliamentary constituency boundaries at present.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Helions Bumpstead emphasised the importance of Neighbourhood Watch groups in tackling minor crime. Suspect vehicles can be reported to Rural South Watch, and number plates circulated very quickly. Our position on the three-way county boundary makes us particularly vulnerable.

Neville Nicholson (nhn462@gmx.co.uk) offered to co-ordinate lists of suspicious vehicles if each village could find a resident willing to collate their villagers' observations and send them to him.

It was reported that oil delivery lorries may not be actually delivering oil, but may instead be stealing it.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Network Group was provisionally arranged for Wednesday 19th April at 7.30pm in the Moot Hall, Steeple Bumpstead.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

e-mail addresses:

Helions Bumpstead:

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