



EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall on **Monday, 6th November 2023 at 7pm.**

Present:

Councillors: M Gillett (Chair)
D Turner
K Wilkinson
M Mann
S Budd
S Baker

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk
M Hicks – County Councillor
N Hardingham – District Councillor

ES71/23/24 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Stanford.

ES72/23/24 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

ES73/23/24 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

ES74/23/24 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 4TH SEPTEMBER AND 27TH SEPTEMBER 2023

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th September and 27th September 2023 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

ES75/23/24 – PUBLIC FORUM

There were 25 members of the public present, most of which were interested in the planning item DC/23/04644 on the Agenda.

A resident from Haggars Mead wished to make the Parish Council aware that the sewage system was not fit for purpose, would regularly fail ending in many visits from Anglian Water.

ES76/23/24 – TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR HICKS

Cllr Hicks report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

Cllr Hicks reported that Storm Babet had flooded 600 homes in Suffolk internally. He explained that if anyone had been affected like that to initially report it online. The County Council had funding in place to help people following an assessment. A three month Council Tax Waiver was also being considered.

In terms of drains, many have been cleared. If there were any that remained blocked or repairs were due, email him and he would find out when they were due to be looked at.

Cllr Hicks briefly went through his report on the following:

- Funding announcement for Ely and Haughley rail junctions
- Council seeks your views for next year's budget – the County Council were experiencing pressures on what to spend the money on, so would like to hear from people with suggestions. The online consultation was open until 4th December 2023 and could be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/budget
- Suffolk Residents invited to help shape the future of library services – contract up for renewal. Residents could have their say at www.suffolk.gov.uk/libraryconsultation

ES77/23/24 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: DC/23/04644 - Planning Application - Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with associated substations and other supporting infrastructure including inverters and transformers, fencing, CCTV and landscaping. Location: Land West Of Blacksmiths Lane, Earl Stonham

Members of the public and residents of Blacksmiths Lane were present at the meeting and raised the following concerns:

- The proposed development would be close to a number of listed properties. Other recent applications had been refused because of this factor. It was felt that there needed to be consistency in decision making.
- The application would have a huge impact on the residents who lived in close proximity to the proposed panels. The panels may not be as visible at ground level, however they would be highly visible from first floor level, especially when the screening proposed would take several years to establish itself.
- Access – Blacksmiths Lane was a single track road with limited passing places with residents raising regular concerns about the volume of traffic and speed of vehicles. It was acknowledged that the developer had proposed that access to the site during the construction phase would be from the A1120 via Spong Farm. It was felt that access for future site maintenance and movement of grazing stock should also be via the A1120 and Spong Farm rather than Blacksmiths Lane.
- Poor drainage – it was apparent, following the recent floods, that the area near to the proposed site had drainage issues with the ditches struggling on a regular basis, resulting in flooding of the land and Blacksmiths Lane and impacting of residents living in and around Haggars Mead.
- The proposal showed that the proposed DNO Station and some of the solar panels would be fitted over the main sewer pipe that served the housing along Blacksmiths Road.
- The verge alongside Blacksmiths Lane contained some of the oldest native flora in the village.

It was felt that should the District Council be minded to grant consent of the proposal, the following conditions be placed on the developer:

- A minimum 160 metres visibility splay at the access point to Spong Farm should be required. There seemed to be an inconsistency in the visibility splay requirement within the application compared to other applications in the past.

- The main sewer pipe should be moved outside of the area for development to enable full access to it at all times.
- The Solar Panels should be sited 150 metres away from all properties.
- All underground cabling and infrastructure should be removed at the decommissioning stage to enable the land to return fully to agricultural use.
- All future access to the site should be via Spong Farm and the A1120. There should be no access via Blacksmiths Lane
- A mound, with planting on the top, should be put around the site to mitigate the visual impact the proposal would have for adjacent residents.
- The Developer should be required to work closely with Suffolk Wildlife Trust to implement the measures set out in their letter to ensure the diversity of flora and fauna is maintained and enhanced.

The District Councillor, Nick Hardingham, briefly went through the planning process.

Members of the public asked Cllr Hardingham if the District Council were fighting for things to change in relation to solar farms, such as lobbying with the Central Government, to which Cllr Hardingham confirmed that they were, as well as liaising with the Local Government Authority and also with other District Councils.

He reported that the District Council were working on a Supplementary Planning Document which would carry weight in relation to planning applications from next year.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council objected to the application for the above reasons.
Clerk to action.

Ref: DC/23/02976 - Householder Application - Erection of detached annexe for dependent family members - Limes Cottage, Chapel Lane, Earl Stonham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 5HP
Reason(s) for re-consultation: New drawing submitted 23.10.2022

The applicant was present and talked through the changes made to the revised drawings.

Members were satisfied that the proposed annexe had reduced in size and was closer to the main house. Also, no objections had been received from neighbouring properties.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council had no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

ES78/23/24 - TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR HARDINGHAM

Cllr Hardingham's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

He briefly went through his report on the following points:

- Flooding – Storm Babet – funding available for those affected.
- Sustainable Transport
- Home Insulation
- Council Housing Repairs
- Your Community, Your Say
- Locality Award

ES79/23/24 – RATIFY DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

The following planning application was considered between meetings and comments submitted to the District Council:

Ref: DC/23/04569 - Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwelling houses (C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for conversion. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q) - Conversion of existing agricultural storage barn to provide 1No dwelling - Whitehouse Old Barn, Church Lane, Earl Stonham – **No Objections**

ES80/23/24 - PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decisions were noted:

Ref: DC/23/02506 - Householder Application - Erection of single-storey rear extension; reopening of former doorway link to snug (in lieu of existing window opening and existing rear door entrance); and insertion of 2No French doorsets, in lieu of existing windows, to southwest sun room range - Mollands Hall, Forward Green, Earl Stonham – **Granted**

Ref: DC/23/02507 - Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single-storey rear extension; reopening of former doorway link to snug (in lieu of existing window opening and existing rear door entrance); and insertion of 2No French doorsets, in lieu of existing windows, to southwest sun room range - Mollands Hall, Forward Green, Earl Stonham - **Granted**

Ref: DC/23/03545 - Householder Application - Erection of a single storey rear extension - Fairfield Cottage, Stowmarket Road, Earl Stonham – **Granted**

Ref: DC/23/03734 - Householder Application - Erection of linked extension (following part demolition of building) (resubmission of DC/23/00377) - Granary Cottage, Upper Langdales Farmhouse, Mill Lane, Earl Stonham - **Refused**

ES81/23/24 - TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk had nothing to report other than what was on the Agenda.

b) **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk reported on the Council's current financial position and movements since the last meeting. It was reported that the balance in the accounts on 31ST October 2023 was £14,391.55.

c) **TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS**

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Oct)	£280.55
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Oct)	£26.00
Barbara Heard	Refreshments for Footpath Walk	£8.10
D Turner	Recorder Printing reimbursement	£180.00
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Nov and backpay)	£405.55
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Nov)	£34.25
Vertas Group Ltd	Grass Cutting (Oct - Dec)	£377.78
ES Village Hall	Recycling Bin Credit - Transfer	£300.85
ES Cricket Club	Grass Cutting Play Area	£400.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £1,888.08 be approved.

d) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

e) **DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2024/25**

The Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting, details on the proposed draft Budget for 2024/25. She had suggested that changes needed to be made in order for a balanced budget to be achieved by way of reducing donations for example.

Members felt that a separate meeting, with a few Councillors, was needed in order for the changes to be explored, discussed and finalised.

The draft budget would then be circulated to all other Cllrs for agreement via email. The final Budget would be brought to the January meeting for final approval.

It was AGREED: That Cllr Gillett, Cllr Wilkinson and the Clerk meet to go through the draft budget in detail and to liaise with the rest of the Parish Council via email.

ES82/23/24 - THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA LOAN PROJECT

Cllr Gillett reported that he had submitted a Borrowing Agreement and was now looking for volunteers to carry out the imaging. Volunteers would be trained and would be able to use the camera through an App on their device. Properties were also being asked for.

ES83/23/24 – SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE – A1120 / A140

Cllr Gillett reported that the ANPR data that was downloaded from the device, following being in the village, had shown that Earl Stonham had the highest amount of speeders in the County.

The data was as follows:

Total photos taken – 4,875
27-30 mph – 1,292
31-34 mph – 1,811
35 mph+ - 1,772

The fastest speed recorded was 70mph.

Cllr Gillett stated that he would be speaking with Cllr Hicks and Josh White, Community Liaison Engineer about the data received and what can be done to reduce these results.

ES84/23/24 – CHRISTMAS TREE

Cllr Turner reported that trees adjacent the car park at the Village Hall were due to be cut down and it had been suggested that one be used for a Christmas Tree on the Green.

It was AGREED: That one of the trees be used as a Christmas Tree.

ES85/23/24 – ALLOTMENTS – CONDITION OF TREES

Cllr Gillett stated that he had met with a Tree Surgeon to discuss the possible Ash Dieback to some of the trees around the Broad Green Allotments.

It had been confirmed that one tree needed to be felled and others needed some of the bark to be cut away.

The cost for the works would be £1,140 and was likely to take three days to complete.

It was AGREED: That the Tree Surgeon carry out the works as quoted. **Clerk to action.**

ES86/23/24 - SPEEDING

This item was included in the earlier items on the Agenda.

ES87/23/24 – STREET LIGHTING

There was nothing to report.

ES88/23/24 - VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Turner reported that the Village Hall rented the building (the old Bowls Club) adjacent to the Village Hall, which was very positive.

ES89/23/24 – FOOTPATHS

Cllr Budd reported that two bridges were broken on two footpaths which the Clerk confirmed she had reported.

It was reported that the footpath near to Mollands Hall, someone had sprayed paint around dog mess that had been left.

ES90/23/24 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- Cllr Budd reported that the East Anglian Daily Times newspaper had released an article which stated that Mr Dan Poulter MP had proposed changes to the A140/A1120 junction. One of the residents had become concerned as the article had mentioned Compulsory Purchase Orders would be served but residents had not received any correspondence in relation to this.
- Cllr Gillett reported that the Blue House at the top of Wicks Lane had been reported to the Dangerous Building Control Team.
- Cllr Budd confirmed that Cllr Gillett would be laying the Poppy Wreath for Remembrance.

ES91/23/24 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 8th January 2023 at 7.30pm

The meeting finished at 9.45pm.

Chairman: Dated: