



EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall on **Monday, 4th March 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present:

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

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk
N Hardingham – District Councillor

ES117/23/24 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Baker.

ES118/23/24 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

ES119/23/24 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

ES120/23/24 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH JANUARY AND 5TH FEBRUARY 2024

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th January and 5th February 2024 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

ES121/23/24 – PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

ES122/23/24 - TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported that the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) had informed Clerks of the annual increase in salary, which this year was a flat sum of £1,925 pro rata. The Clerk informed Members that the increase would be backdated to April 2023. **All Agreed.**

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated information about a new project, the Hedgehog Highway. It was run by a lady who was trying to encourage all local councils to purchase fence surrounds which would open up a "highway" for hedgehogs to roam and forage for food and would hopefully help to decrease their risk of extinction.

Whilst Members were in support of the project they felt at the current time funds were short and so they could not sign up to the scheme.

The Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) had been in touch with Clerks in relation to encouraging all Councillors to implement more formal email addresses.

Members again felt that due to low funds, email address costs could not be met at the current time.

Cllr Gillett reported that a review of the website should be made and that he would speak with Suffolk Cloud in order to re-vamp some of the pages and for other pages to be added. **All Agreed.**

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 27th February 2024 was £10,573.65.

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

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Feb)	£296.25
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Feb)	£26.00
M J D Agri Services	Ditch Works (Village Green)	£1,860.00
Great Bricett PC	Contribution to Ink Cartridge	£14.77
ES VH	Recycling Bin Credit (for car park fund)	£328.61
Vertas Group Ltd	Grass Cutting Jan - Mar 2024	£377.78
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Mar)	£296.25
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Mar)	£32.24
Street Lighting Supplies	Village Hall Streetlight replacement	£420.62
The LED Store	Village Hall Streetlight replacement	£151.62

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £3,804.14 be approved.

d) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

e) **APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR**

It was AGREED: That Trevor Brown CPFA be appointed as Internal Auditor for 2023/24.

f) **EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS**

It was NOTED: That an External Audit would not be required for 2023/24.

ES123/23/24 – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

a) **REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

It was AGREED: That the Internal Audit Control and Risk Management Arrangements be reviewed and approved.

b) **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS**

The Clerk reported that the Financial Regulations were currently being reviewed and amended by National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and amendments would be shared with Clerks in due course. The Clerk would bring it to a future meeting for approval,

It was AGREED: That the Standing Orders be approved and adopted.

c) **DATA PROTECTION POLICY**

It was AGREED: That the Data Protection Policy be reviewed, approved and adopted.

d) **DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY**

It was AGREED: That the Document Retention Policy be reviewed, approved and adopted.

e) **PUBLICATION SCHEME**

It was AGREED: That the Publication Scheme be reviewed, approved and adopted.

ES124/23/24 - TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR HICKS

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

He reported on the following issues:

- Public consultation on SCC's proposed devolution deal starts on 18th March
- Dragon Patcher lands in Suffolk to bolster response to rural potholes
- Councils' loft insulation offer for Suffolk homes
- More of Suffolk's tree cover and orchards to be restored
- Applications open for new Suffolk Business Board

Cllr Wilkinson asked Cllr Hicks about the ownership of verges, to which Cllr Hicks explained that the first three feet of a verge was owned by Suffolk County Council and after that would be the landowners.

Cllr Stanford asked Cllr Hicks about the road defect on Fen Lane and the flooding / blocked drainage at the junction of Mill Lane. The breakage of the road was dangerous and needed urgent attention.

Cllr Hicks asked for any further information, including photographs, to be sent to him.

ES125/23/24 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: DC/24/00203 - Householder application - Erection of single storey rear and front porch extension (following demolition of existing rear lean-to extension, outbuilding and front porch) - 3 Middlewood Way, Forward Green, Earl Stonham

Cllrs received the application just before the meeting. They felt that they needed more time to look at the proposal and also view any comments online before commenting.

It was AGREED: That an Extraordinary Meeting be arranged and the item deferred to that meeting. **Clerk to action.**

ES126/23/24 – PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decisions were noted:

Ref: DC/23/04958 - Construction of replacement dwelling and outbuilding. Rose Cottage, Larters Lane, Earl Stonham – **Granted**

Ref: DC/23/05498 - Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered, all other matters reserved) - Erection of 4no. dwellings and construction of new vehicular access - Land Adjacent to Shepherd and Dog Inn, Stowmarket Road, Earl Stonham - **Refused**

ES127/23/24 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – CLLR HARDINGHAM

Cllr Hardingham’s report would be circulated following the meeting and would be published on the village website.

He reported on the following issues:

- MSDC Plan
- MSDC 2024/25 Budget
- Gateway 14
- Stowmarket Sports, Health and Leisure Facility
- Local Issues
- Locality Award

ES128/23/24 – PARISH COUNCIL VACANCIES

Cllr Gillett stated that due to there being two vacancies on the Parish Council, an advert should be published to ask for any interest. **Clerk to action.**

ES129/23/24 – D-DAY CELEBRATIONS

Cllr Turner reported that plans for the D-Day Celebration would consist of the Beacon being lit on Thursday, 6th June. Whilst residents were being encouraged to make snacks such as sausage rolls, refreshments would be provided. The proclamation would be read by Cllr Stanford.

On Saturday, 8th June there would be a supper at the Village Hall which would be based on wartime food and the Theatre Guild planned to provide entertainment.

Sunday, 9th June would consist of a 40s themed Fun Day for the village with Swing Dancing etc and a bar. Residents would be asked to bring their own lunch.

Cllr Turner stated that a contribution from the Parish Council to help towards the events would be appreciated.

It was AGREED: That £100 donation be made to the Village Hall for the D-Day Celebrations.
Clerk to action.

ES130/23/24 – MULTICOURT INSPECTION REPORT

The report on the Multicourt Inspection from the District Council had been received. It was noted that any issues were minor and low risk.

ES131/23/24 – BLACKSMITHS LANE

It was noted that the ditch on Blacksmiths Lane was currently on Highways to do list.

ES132/23/24 – SOLAR FARM UPDATE

There was nothing to report.

ES133/23/24 – VILLAGE GREEN

Cllr Gillett reported that he had repaired the broken slat on the bench. He also reported that the ditch had been cleared. During the ditch clearance the Noticeboards, one owned by the Parish Council and one owned by the Church, had to be temporarily removed and were broken. They were currently drying out at Cllr Gillett’s address.

Tony Turner had offered to re-cork the Noticeboard belonging to the Parish Council before it was re-installed.

ES134/23/24 - THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA LOAN PROJECT UPDATE

Cllr Gillett reported that all surveys had been undertaken totalling 25. Feedback was now being given to the home owners.

Cllr Stanford suggested that information on what the surveys were for and what the results found would be interesting to be shared with the rest of the village and perhaps could be included in the next Recorder.

ES135/23/24 - SPEEDING UPDATE

The Village Community Speedwatch continued to monitor motorists with seven sessions being held and 139 speeders captured so far.

ES136/23/24 – STREET LIGHTING

It was noted that the streetlights in the village have all been replaced with LED bulbs.

ES137/23/24 - VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Turner reported that the sewage system at the Village Hall had had to be repaired following faulty valves causing the system to flood.

ES138/23/24 – FOOTPATHS

The next Footpath Walk (Gold) was due to take place on Saturday, 13th April 2024 followed by tea and biscuits at the Hall.

ES139/23/24 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- Resident’s light was too bright and was shining on other properties plus distracting for motorists – asked to turn it down
- Larters Lane – warning sign was missing
- Church Services - Mothering Sunday - 11am, Good Friday, 2pm and Easter Morning, 6am and 11am

ES140/23/24 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – tba (APM & APCM)

The meeting finished at 9.35pm.

Chairman: Dated: