



EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall on **Monday, 8th January 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present:

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

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

ES92/23/24 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Baker.

ES93/23/24 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Stanford declared an interest in item 10 (e) on the Agenda.

ES94/23/24 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

ES95/23/24 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2023

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2023 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

ES96/23/24 – PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

ES97/23/24 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

Members shared the concerns reported online by a resident in relation to the application, as follows:

- The area was designated as 'countryside' and did not come within settlement boundaries of Wicks Lane.
- The sewerage system was already very poor so additional housing would overload the system and would need substantial improvements before any development should even be considered.
- Access onto the A1120 continued to be a hazard due to poor visibility splays so additional driveways would increase the risks of accidents.

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

Ref: DC/23/04958 - Full Planning Application - Construction of replacement dwelling and outbuilding
- Rose Cottage, Larters Lane, Earl Stonham

Whilst Members had no objections to the application, they had concerns in relation to the problems the construction could make for the residents and felt that should the application be approved, the following conditions should be considered:

- The residents should be taken into consideration, particularly the next door neighbour – the development would cause a lot of disruption and noise during construction.
- There were concerns about the amount of construction traffic that would be using what was a very narrow lane to access the site and therefore thought should be given to this. It was suggested that vehicles should be reversed down the lane which would give easier access and exiting and also resulting in less damage to the lane and its verges.
- At the end of construction, it was asked that the lane and its verges be reinstated back to their current state at least, or improved.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council had no objections to the application, but the above conditions should be considered should the application be approved. **Clerk to action.**

ES98/23/24 - PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decisions were noted:

Ref: DC/23/04394 - Full Planning Application - Conversion of stable/storage building to form 1No dwelling - Alvor Cottage Stables, Stearns Lane, Earl Stonham – **Refused**

Ref: DC/23/02976 - Householder Application - Erection of detached annexe for dependant family members - Limes Cottage, Chapel Lane, Earl Stonham - **Refused**

ES99/23/24 - 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 briefly went through the report commenting on the following topics:

- More money for adult and children's services
- Trading Standards warn of scams
- Foxhall Recycling Centre redevelopment completed ahead of schedule
- Father Gritmas, Gritty Gritty Bang Bang and Spread Sheeran prepared for county's cold snap

Cllr Stanford raised the recently reported road defects at Fen Lane. The road was collapsing at either side following the recent storms and flooding and that remedial work was urgently needed.
Clerk to forward reference number to Cllr Hicks.

ES100/23/24 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR HARDINGHAM

Cllr Hardingham report would be circulated after the meeting and would be published on the village website. He reported on the following topics:

- Empty Homes and Second Homes charges

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Flooding in Debenham – public meeting due to be held
- Stowmarket Sports Facilities Improvements
- Cosy Homes initiative
- New Council Houses
- Call for Sites

Cllr Stanford asked about Gateway 14 and were there any updates to which Cllr Hardingham explained that the District Council had planned for an Innovation Centre to be built which could be used for a variety of things, which included somewhere for training courses to be held and small businesses could be set up with new ideas. He added that in relation to new tenants, the District Council wanted to push for more than warehousing.

ES101/23/24 - SOLAR FARM PROPOSAL

Cllr Hardingham reported that the proposed solar farm at Badley had been refused by Planning Committee following concerns from the Heritage Team that the solar farm would be close to the church and listed buildings, plus the results of a noise survey.

Cllr Wilkinson explained that the proposed Solar Farm in Earl Stonham would also be close to listed buildings and felt that the issues at Badley would be the same for Earl Stonham.

Cllr Hardingham reported that the application was due to be heard at Planning Committee on 17th January 2024.

Members were also aware that discussions were taking place between the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Solar Farm Company and those discussions would be useful to be informed about. Cllr Hardingham agreed and stated that he would find out who the contact was at Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Members asked Cllr Hardingham to suggest that the application be deferred to a future meeting of the Planning Committee so that another public meeting could take place in the village where mitigations could be discussed should the application be approved.

Cllr Hardingham shared with members a possible permissive footpath document which showed the relocation of a footpath through the site, which could be suggested should the application be approved.

ES102/23/24 - 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 2nd January 2024 was £13,259.69.

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

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Pay (Dec)	£296.25
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Office Allowance/Exp (Dec)	£26.00
D Turner	Recorder Printing reimbursement	£190.00
J Roberts	Ash Dieback Tree Work (Allotments)	£760.00
Suffolk Cloud	Domain for Website	£16.50
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Pay (Jan)	£296.25

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Jan)	£28.25
Paul Williamson Ltd	Christmas Tree	£150.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £1,763.25 be approved.

d) BANK RECONCILIATION

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

e) DONATIONS

It was AGREED: That due to the tight budget, donations be kept to groups based in the village as follows:

- Forward Africa - £100
- Churchyard Maintenance - £600
- Cricket Club - £400

f) FINAL BUDGET FOR 2024/25

It was AGREED: That the Final Budget for 2024/25 be approved.

g) PRECEPT FOR 2024/25

It was AGREED: That the Precept of £7,675 for 2024/25 be approved. **Clerk to action.**

ES103/23/24 – RECORDER

Members discussed the need to reduce outgoing costs for the 2024/25 budget and was limited to those that the Parish Council could control. One of which was the Recorder.

Following a brief discussion it was felt that the Recorder should be reduced to three issues a year instead of four. This would reduce printing costs

It was AGREED: That the Recorder be reduced to three issues per year – March, July and November.

ES104/23/24 - THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA LOAN PROJECT UPDATE

Cllr Gillett reported that five volunteers had come forward in relation to this project, himself included, and that eight applications had been received in relation to residents wishing to use the camera on their homes.

Cllr Gillett confirmed that the camera would be available between 14th February and 13th March.

ES105/23/24 – ALLOTMENTS – CONDITION OF TREES - UPDATE

Cllr Gillett reported that works had been completed on the ash die back on trees at the allotments.

ES106/23/24 – DITCH ALONG THE GREEN - UPDATE

Cllr Gillett reported that the ditch works were currently in progress.

ES107/23/24 - SPEEDING UPDATE

There was nothing to report.

ES108/23/24 – STREET LIGHTING

The Clerk reported that the remaining street light replacements were due to take place by the end of the month (January 2024).

ES109/23/24 - VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Turner reported that the Old Bowls Club was no longer being used and so potential groups to use the building were being sought.

ES110/23/24 – FOOTPATHS

There was nothing to report.

ES111/23/24 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- Resident in Blacksmiths Lane reported a lot of water and ditches in poor state
- Middle of Suffolk is Middlewood Green – tree has been planted to mark the spot and for the Kings Coronation.

ES112/23/24 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 4th March 2024 at 7.30pm

The meeting finished at 9.20pm.

Chairman: Dated: