



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman

Roger Barrell

**Meeting of Stratford St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 8th
January 2024, at the Village Institute Higham Road at 1930hrs**

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cllr R Barrell - Chairman
Cllr W Davies
Cllr G Robinson
Cllr M Pearce
Cllr L Shead
Cllr D Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE:

F Hall - Clerk
County Cllr Georgia Hall
District Cllr John Ward
Member of the public - 1

01.01.24 Present and apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllr Francis

02.01.24 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct. None

03.01.24 To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13th November 2023

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th November 2023 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr G Robinson, all in favour.

04.01.24 To discuss if the PC has received any applications to fill the 2 vacancies on the Parish Council. None received.

05.01.24 Public Forum and receive reports from the District and County Councillor

Reports from District and County Councillors were circulated previously and are available on Stratford St Mary PC website and County/District Council websites.

District Cllr Ward highlighted from his reports that due to budget pressures Babergh will implement short stay parking charges for Hadleigh, Sudbury and Lavenham.
County Cllr Hall highlighted from her report that any grit bins that the PC own can be reported on the Suffolk County Council reporting tool if they need to be refilled. Residents need to be aware of

scams which are ongoing. There is no update on the public footpath sign being erected on the Anchor footpath – County Cllr Hall will follow this up. There is pressure on SCC budget so Museum and Arts funding will be cut from 2025 onwards - no funding will be available. Next report will have full details. County Cllr Hall confirmed that a further 10 million pounds is being put into making rural roads better but there are still criteria to be met for pothole repairs.

06.01.24 Grass cutting

To discuss what can be done in between Babergh cutting the grass to keep the village looking tidier. Cllr Francis to give an update on options and quotes for interim cuts. All in agreement to defer to the next meeting. **GF**

07.01.24 Planning Applications

No planning applications have been received.

08.01.24 Suffolk County Council's Community Self Help Scheme

Cllr D Robinson advised that Cllr Francis and a parishioner have volunteered to train as Supervisors. This scheme is not only for Cllrs - people in the parish can also get involved. Liability insurance has been checked but waiting for confirmation from the insurance company for the proposal to use a hedge cutter to make sure liability is covered. Once training is completed a list is to be drawn up of what PPE needs to be purchased. County Cllr Hall advised that she has some money in her locality budget that could be used towards the purchase of equipment. Clerk to sign the PC up to this scheme. **DR/GF/Clerk**

09.01.24 Chairmans comments

A resignation letter was received from Cllr Street - The Chairman would like to thank Keith for his time on the PC. Keith has advised that he would still like to volunteer for anything that he can assist with.

Richard Thomsons field – need a formal meeting with the Village Institute Committee to discuss this.

It would be good if the PC could start to clear some of the items off the agenda.

Insurance is due for renewal so needs to be looked at – Clerk to check renewal date and obtain new quotes. **Clerk**

10.01.24 Correspondence and Clerks Report

18.12.23 - Resignation letter received from Cllr Keith Street – noted, see agenda item 09.01.24

Renewal of SLCC membership for the clerk - £144. Clerk proposed to cancel this membership as any information is gained from SALC and NALC. Cllr G Robinson proposed to cancel, Cllr D Robinson seconded and all in favour. **Clerk**

Concerns raised from a resident with regards to Stratford (St Mary) Mill, ECC Bridge No 2817 – footbridge at the top of Lower Street. With the colder weather the bridge has become slippery and there are no anti slip plates. Essex County Council have advised that the bridge is not No 2817 but the footbridge next to it so it is not their responsibility. Cllr D Robinson has reported the bridge online with Suffolk County Council but they have advised that this is Essex County Council's responsibility and have passed it to them to resolve. Cllr D Robinson to follow this up. **DR**

Email 17.11 received from a Parishioner with regards to dog fouling and suggestions to deter future problems. Cllr G Robinson advised that the PC as a body should be encouraging good behaviour and show that they are taking notice of the dog fouling problem so signs are needed. Cllr D Robinson advised that the PC have received 2 emails from residents with regards to dog fouling believing that the PC can do something about but the PC have no power to enforce. The public are advised to report any dog fouling on the online reporting tool on the Babergh Council website – www.babergh.gov.uk/report-dog-fouling. Proposal for signs with QR codes on them to report dog fouling - this is to be further discussed under item 12.01.24.

Email 05.12 received from a Parishioner with regards to dog fouling on Strickmere – they have had 3 recent incidents of dog fouling outside their house and the Parishioner has reported this to

Babergh. Babergh has reverted to advise that although a resident has evidence of dog fouling they cannot act as the dog fouling was on a resident's driveway, which is private property however, they will issue a warning letter to the alleged owner. Noted

11.01.24 Replacement Dog Bins

2 x replacement dog bins with vapour traps are required for the Village Green and Upper Street/School Lane corner. The Clerk obtained 3 quotes which were circulated to the Councillors before the meeting. Cllr G Robinson proposed an expenditure of £600 for the 2 x bins, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

12.01.24 No dog fouling signs

It was noted that an email from a parishioner had been received objecting to the purchase of the signs but the PC discussed and have decided to go ahead. Cllr G Robinson proposed £20 expenditure for the purchase of 3 'no dog fouling' signs, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour with 1 Cllr abstaining.

Update on ideas for educating the village on dog fouling – Proposal for graphic signs with QR codes or web addresses on them for how to report dog fouling – Cllr G Robinson to obtain costs. **GR**

13.01.24 Finance

- (1) To approve the expenditure since the last meeting and to receive a financial report from the RFO including balances at bank. To sign report to clarify as correct. The expenditure sheet, financial report and bank statements had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Shead and all in favour. **Decision** expenditure of £3,050.96 from 14.11.23 to 08.01.24, balances at the bank – Current account £7,430.67 and reserve account £26,408.24 was approved by all and signed by the Chairman. A copy can be found attached to the minutes.
- (2) Monthly cashflow analysis against agreed Precept – no comment
- (3) Monthly cashflow reserves – Cllr D Robinson proposed, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour.
- (4) Changing bank accounts - bank signature and electronic sign off – Clerk will speak to the PCs current bank Santander to see if the accounts can be upgraded.
- (5) To discuss, agree and sign the Precept application – All in agreement to keep the precept at £16,100, Cllr Davies proposed, Cllr G Robinson seconded, all in favour. With the change of Babergh Councils tax base this will mean an increase of 0.27% to Band D Council tax which is a 13p increase for the year. The Parish Councils budget is higher than the precept but all in agreement to use money in reserves to cover this.

14.01.24 Earmark Reserves

Cllr D Robinson circulated a list of ideas on what the PC could earmark / use reserves for to Councillors before the meeting (copy attached to the minutes). Cllr G Robinson proposed looking at nominating the triangle in Kenyon Close as a village green and exploring the idea of outdoor adult gym equipment. Also suggestions of adding bus shelter repairs and seat maintenance to the list. These ideas are to be added to the list uncoded. Cllr D Robinson proposed to accept the suggestions for earmarking/using reserves, Cllr Pearce seconded, all in favour. Figures are to be adjusted and to be discussed again at the next meeting. **DR**

15.01.24 The River Garden

Still awaiting permission from NWL to install a bollard in front of the gate at the River Garden – No update on cost for getting the noticeboard turned. **Clerk/GF**
There is a fallen tree at the River Garden which needs to be removed – Clerk to contact NWL. **Clerk**

16.01.24 Noticeboards

Cllr G Robinson circulated quotes for the replacement noticeboards at the Anchor and the Weir to Councillors before the meeting. Cllr G Robinson proposed the purchase of 2 x noticeboards made from composite which will have low maintenance at a cost of £1050 plus VAT each, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour. The Chairman has agreed to install. **RB/GR**

17.01.24 ETRO's / TRO Lower Street – Double yellow lines

No updates received – waiting for costs. **Clerk**

18.01.24 To consider the purchase of a new speed sign for the village

Cllr D Robinson has been obtaining quotes for a new speed inductive device and the 2 most suitable devices are:

1. Truvelo approx. £4,000
2. Elan City - £2,250

Cllr D Robinson proposed to purchase a speed inductive device from Elan City – base cost is £2,200 with an extra £50 for a solar panel if purchased at the time of ordering, Cllr Pearce seconded, all in favour. Councillor D Robinson to enquire about discounts for extra solar panel and additional camera pack and report back.

19.01.24 Electric Pylons campaign

Ongoing – awaiting further updates.

20.01.24 Footpaths

Black Horse footpath overgrown vegetation – This footpath has now been cleared.

Anchor footpath – Update on reinstatement of public footpath sign – this has been discussed under agenda item 05.01.24

21.01.24 Village Institute and Institute Committee

All maintenance works to the children's playground have now been completed – PC are waiting for confirmation from Norman Woodard at the Institute Committee to confirm that everything has been completed as agreed and to confirm handover.

Cllr G Robinson to look at a 'No dogs' sign for the play area. **GR**

The Chairman signed the Constitution of the Stratford St Mary Village Institute Dated 30 June 2023.

22.01.24 Scheduled Councillor walks / Village works action plan

The PC would like to be more proactive and arrange formal walks around the village on a regular basis to look at maintenance and any issues that there may be. Cllr Shead proposed that the walks be once a month with 2-3 Cllrs participating and using a map that has already been created to look at routes, divide them up and then organise a rota. All in agreement to go ahead with this. Register to be started for works required. **LS/GR**

23.01.24 Promotion of the Parish Council

Cllr G Robinson proposed that a strategy is needed and then a creation of a communication plan. Messages will be stronger/better if branded and are consistent. Cllr G Robinson and Cllr D Robinson to revert with ideas. **GR/DR**

24.01.24 Asset Register review

Updated asset register with the noticeboard at the River Garden added was circulated to the Councillors before the meeting. Maintenance column to be added and deleted items to be archived. Defer to the next agenda. **DR**

25.01.24 Purchase of new maintenance equipment

Agreed to defer to the next agenda. **GF**

26.01.24 Parish Council Activities in the Community

Update to be received on the overgrown tree affecting lamppost, due to be repainted, on corner of School Lane and Upper Street – the Chairman has called at the house twice but there has been no answer so will try again. **RB**

27.01.24 Repainting of lampposts

Suffolk Highways have advised that this work will be done whenever the weather is suitable. PC noted that expenditure of £132 plus VAT has been agreed per lamppost but one of the lampposts is green so the cost for this will be £177 plus VAT.

28.01.24 Community Energy Project

PC agreed to continue to express an interest in this project.

29.01.24 Dealing with problems from village residents

PC all in agreement to do all follow ups via the Parish Clerk to any emails received from residents.

30.01.24 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

Notice for Annual Parish Meeting – The person that delivers the Quartet can deliver these notices for £10.

Cllr G Robinson proposed that the road signs need cleaning.

31.01.24 Confirm the date of the 11th March 2024 at 1930hrs for the next Parish Council meeting

Agreed

Meeting closed at 2117hrs