



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman

Roger Barrell

Clerk to Parish Council

Faye Hall

MINUTES of the Extraordinary Meeting of Stratford St Mary Parish Council held at the Parish Room, Stratford St Mary at 1930hrs on Monday 7th August 2023.

Minutes

PRESENT:

Cllr R Barrell – Chairman
D Robinson – Vice Chairman
Cllr W Davies
Cllr L Shead
Cllr G Robinson
Cllr G Francis
Cllr K Street

IN ATTENDANCE:

F Hall - Clerk
Members of the Public - 0

01.08.23 Present and apologies for absence.

Apologies received from County Councillor Georgia Hall and District Councillor John Ward.

02.08.23 Declarations of interest and dispensations:

- (1) to receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None
- (2) receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any). None
- (3) grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate. None

03.08.23 Public Forum

No members of the public were in attendance.

04.08.23 Planning Applications

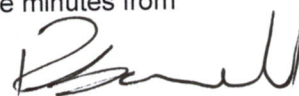
None.

05.08.23 Internal Audit

The Internal Audit for 2022-2023 was discussed and reviewed – this was circulated to the Councillors before the meeting and is available to view on the Parish Councils website.

Following recommendations from the audit the following was agreed:

Finances Item 1 – The Clerk will attach a copy of the expenditure sheet to the back of the minutes from meetings when published.


18/9/23

Financial Control Item 2 – All in agreement that the Clerk / RFO circulates a financial report to all Councillors prior to a meeting with bank reconciliations and bank statements which are then signed off at the meeting if all in agreement.

Reserves Item 8 – Auditor has advised that the Parish Council must be mindful to follow proper practices which state that it is acceptable for general (non-earmarked) reserves to be equal to 3 to 12 months of net revenue expenditure and that there is no upper limit for earmarked reserves. It is recommended that Council consider the purpose of the general reserves and look to adopt a reserves policy. This has been noted and Cllr D Robinson and Cllr Francis are to look into what reserves could be earmarked for.

S137 Item 10 – All agreed to change the allocation of £30 for the Suffolk Preservation Society to a subscription.

Pension Item 15 – Clerk has confirmed that a declaration to the Pension Regulator has been completed.

Standing Orders Item 16 – Reviewing threshold amendments (SI 2022/139) of Public Contracts (Amendment) Regulations 2022 which came into force on 21st December 2022 and make changes to the contract value limits from £25,000 to £30,000 for non-central government authorities. All in agreement that this does not affect Stratford St Mary Parish Council.

Financial Regulations Item 17 – Financial Regulations have been reviewed at this meeting and will be annually reviewed as recommended.

Website Accessibility Item 19 – Cllr D Robinson has obtained an Accessibility Statement from our website provider and will do an accessibility test on this.

Internal Control Item 23 – Clerk has checked and the Internal Controls were approved and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th September 2022.

Code of Conduct Item 29 – Cllr D Robinson confirmed that the Code of Conduct policy has been updated to the 2023 version and has been uploaded onto the website.

06.08.23 Financial Regulations policy

Cllr D Robinson circulated the Financial Regulations policy to Councillors before the meeting.

Cllr G Robinson proposed to adopt, Cllr Francis seconded and all in favour.

07.08.23 Website proposals and training

Other website providers have been looked into which also provide email addresses, but the Parish Council are locked into their current email address provider until the end of 2024 so no option to change as yet. Cllr D Robinson proposed 2 training sessions with the Parish Councils current website provider for himself and the Clerk, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour.

08.08.23 Richard Thomson's field

1. Ownership and Management: Richard Thomson has advised us that he very generously intends to leave his field to the existing Village Institute Charity, who will be responsible for managing the land according to the existing terms of the Trust.

2. Responsibilities and Costs: Although the maintenance falls upon the Charity to maintain the Trust assets, the Parish Council has historically assumed some of the maintenance costs. It was proposed that the Parish Council and the Village Institute Committee collaborate to consider any likely future costs and funding as a result of the extra responsibilities.


3. It had been pointed out by Mr Thomson the arrangement would involve three committees: The Village Institute Charity, the Parish Council (as Custodian Trustees of the land and building) and the Charity Commissioners, and that this arrangement gives oversight and control for the benefit of the village.

Documentation and Transparency: To assist clarification of the relationship between the Charity and the Parish Council, an outline of the roles and responsibilities should be drawn up, with processes stated. Cllrs D Robinson and Cllr Francis agreed to produce a document to be agreed by the Parish Council and Institute Committee.

4. Reporting: Cllr D Robinson Village Institute Committee representative proposed that an agenda item of an Institute meeting should be included at each Parish Council meeting to provide updates on discussions and decisions. Cllr G Robinson suggested that this reporting process be included in the Standing Orders if feasible.

09.08.23 The River Garden Lease

A new lease agreement has now been received from Savills acting on behalf of Northumbrian Water for the River Garden which the Chairman circulated to the Councillors before the meeting. The Clerk has checked with BHIB that the Parish Councils insurance policy will cover the River Garden and has had email confirmation back that it does. Cllr G Robinson proposed the lease be signed by the Chairman, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour.


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10.08.23 Strickmere hedges and fencing

At the Parish Councils last meeting in July a parishioner raised the fencing at number 50 Strickmere and District Cllr Ward who was in attendance advised that he would refer this to Planning Enforcement. District Cllr Ward has further advised that Planning Enforcement have confirmed that the fence is a breach of planning and are in contact with the resident. Hedges do not come into the same guidelines for planning as fences. This Item is now removed from the PC agenda and is with the resident and Babergh to resolve.

11.08.23 Boxted Bridge

Cllr Davies has advised that Boxted Parish Council have emailed to ask for Stratford St Marys Parish Councils support to get the Boxted Bridge repaired and not replaced. Cllr Davies proposed to offer support, Cllr Street seconded and all in favour. Clerk to email Boxted Parish Council.

12.08.23 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr D Robinson is looking into a Neighbourhood Plan and will revert on this at September's meeting.

13.08.23 Footpaths and open access

No updates.

14.08.23 Neighbourhood Watch

Agreed to defer this item to September's meeting.

15.08.23 Replacement Dog bins

Cllr D Robinson has looked into replacement dog bins which are between £80 and £90 for red ones. Cllr Francis proposed an expenditure of £250 maximum to purchase 2 new dog bins to replace the damaged ones, Cllr G Robinson seconded and all in favour.

16.08.23 Risk Assessment policy

Cllr D Robinson circulated the Risk Assessment policy to Councillors before the meeting. It was highlighted that it is important for all Councillors to do continued training and also that a record of Councillor training should be kept by the Clerk. Cllr G Robinson proposed to adopt this policy, Cllr D Robinson seconded and all in favour.

17.08.23 Grass cutting in Kenyon Close

Agreed to defer this item to September's meeting.

18.08.23 GDPR policy

Cllr G Robinson amended the GDPR policy and circulated to the Councillors before the meeting. Cllr Francis proposed to adopt, Cllr D Robinson seconded and all in favour.

19.08.23 Village mailing list

Cllr D Robinson advised that the Village mailing list is a list of about 100 email addresses and questioned if this should still be maintained. Cllr D Robinson proposed that there is no requirement now for the Village mailing list, Cllr Francis seconded and all in favour. Cllr D Robinson to send out a formal statement to people on the mailing list.

20.08.23 Speed sign


Cllr D Robinson has been researching speed signs and is able to get a demonstration of one that might be suitable as a replacement for the current one. All agreed to defer this item to September's meeting.

21.08.23 Village sign

Agree purchase of flag holders for village sign, vandalised recently. Suggest metal replacements 2 @ £6.00 Amazon = £12.00. Cllr D Robinson proposed to purchase, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour.

22.08.23 New signs

Purchase of signs to clear up dog waste, showing signs of ageing - at the weir (2), and by the chase. Replace with solid screw in 3 @ £2.49 = £7.47. Cllr D Robinson proposed to purchase, Cllr G Robinson seconded and all in favour.


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23.08.23 Maintenance equipment

All agreed to defer the purchase of maintenance equipment to September's meeting.

24.08.23 Next meeting

To note the change of date for the next meeting will be Monday the 18th of September 1930hrs in The Parish Rooms. Noted

Meeting closed at 2110hrs

R. Smith
18/9/23