



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman

Roger Barrell

Stratford St Mary Parish Council meeting held on **Monday 11th November 2024**, at the Village Institute at 1930hrs.

Minutes

PRESENT:

Cllr R Barrell – Chairman
Cllr D Robinson
Cllr W Davies
Cllr M Pearce
Cllr Shead
Cllr G Robinson
Cllr N Wright

IN ATTENDANCE:

F Hall – Clerk
County Councillor Georgia
District Councillor John Ward
1 member of the public

- 01.11.24 Present and apologies for absence.** None
- 02.11.24 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct.** Cllr D Robinson and Cllr Davies are trustees of the Village Institute Committee.
- 03.11.24 To approve Minutes of the meeting held on 9th of September 2024 and the extraordinary meeting held on Monday 7th of October 2024.** The minutes of the meetings held on the 9th September 2024 and the 7th of October 2024 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr G Robinson, seconded by Cllr Davies, all in favour.
- 04.11.24 To discuss if the PC has received any applications to fill the 2 vacancies on the Parish Council.** No applications have been received.
- 05.11.24 Public Forum and receive reports from the District and County Councillor**
Councillors had submitted their most recent reports which had been circulated by the Clerk and are also available to view on the Parish Councils website.
County Cllr Hall highlighted from her report that they have 38 new gritters on fleet – further information on winter maintenance and what roads are being gritted can be found on the SCC

R Barrell
13/1/25

website - www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/check-which-roads-are-gritted. If the PC have any grit bins that need to be filled, then contact SCC. There are proposed improvements to walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure funded by Active Travel England for Capel St Mary to Copdock. Consultations are open until 20 December 2024.

Update from County Cllr Hall given on the proposal to make SSM to Dedham more pedestrian friendly – a site visit has been undertaken and there is no scope to install a footpath however other options are being looked at like a 30mph extension, 40mph buffer zone or pedestrian warning signs. Flooding on Dedham Road – minor repairs are required and are currently in a queue to be done. The reinstatement of the public footpath sign at The Anchor is still ongoing. A Parishioner emailed to ask if more no HGV signs could be placed on Higham Road and the Chairman advised that there are still HGVs going down this road so signs are not working – County Cllr Hall will look into. Chevrons outside Low Hill House – question raised if these can be moved to make them more visible. County Cllr Hall advised that this continues to be an issue, a site visit has been done and hedge needs to be cut back, owners to be written to and if continued issue then SCC may be able to talk to Highways for enforcement. SCC have looked at the possibility of moving the chevrons, but this cannot be done. The Chairman raised that the road markings are worn out and need to be repainted – this needs to be reported on the Highways reporting tool. Repair to Higham Road ditch - ditch has been inspected and an order has been placed for repair to be undertaken on or before the 15th of November.

District Cllr Ward highlighted from his report that the first homes from the redeveloped former Council officers in Cork Lane are now on the market. Council Housing is a growing problem due to funding. Devolution update- the upcoming English Devolution White Paper will set out more detail on the government's devolution plans, including on working with councils to move to simpler structures that make sense for their local areas, with efficiency savings from council reorganisation helping to meet the needs of local people.

A Member of the public raised agenda item 29 slow down signs on Strickmere, at a previous meeting the signs were proposed for village wide and not just for Strickmere – this was noted and will be further discussed when the agenda item arises.

06.11.24 Weir Bridge

Cllr Pearce advised at the last meeting that he had established with the Public Rights of Way team at Essex Highways that the Weir bridge is on their system. Essex Highways have advised that they will arrange for someone to come out and inspect the bridge. Cllr Pearce advised that a update was received on the 17th of October from Essex Highways confirming that they will carry out an inspection which could take up to 56 days.

Funding is available from Suffolk County Council Rights of Way and Access team for improvements to right of ways – Cllr D Robinson proposed that the funding could be used for the provision of fencing and improvement to surfacing of the bridge. All in agreement to proceed with this and Cllr D Robinson to put in an application. DR

07.11.24 B1029 Dedham Road, Stratford St Mary, Flooding Issues

Update received from County Cllr Hall in agenda item 05.11.24

08.11.24 Footpaths

Anchor footpath – reinstatement of public footpath sign. Update received from County Cllr Hall in agenda item 05.11.24

09.11.24 Demarcation of the pavement past the Swan car park and Swan House, parked car issues

The Swan have resurfaced their carpark and there are marked bays – PC in agreement to see if this makes any difference to the parked car issues and monitor.

10.11.24 Proposal to make the B1029 from SSM to Dedham more pedestrian friendly


Update received from County Cllr Hall in agenda item 05.11.24

11.11.24 Planning Applications

Planning applications received:

DC/24/04729

Proposal: Householder application – erection of rear extension providing new living



accommodation at ground floor with first floor mezzanine bedroom with the proposed roof.
Location: Clementines, Lower Street, Stratford St Mary, CO7 6JS
Comments by 29.11.24
PC agreed no comment for this planning application.

DC/24/04951

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a conservation area – large pine tree in rear garden to be felled to ground level. Tree has grown too big for garden.
Location: Walnut Cottage, Upper Street, Stratford St Mary, CO7 6JN
Comments by 02.12.24
PC agreed no comment for this planning application.

It was noted that the planning permission for Woodgate Farm has been approved.

12.11.24 Chairmans comments

The Chairman and Cllr Davies laid a wreath on Remembrance Sunday.

13.11.24 Correspondence and Clerks Report

Precept of £8,050 received on the 16.09.24. Noted.

Confirmation has been received from HM Land Registry that the address on the title deeds for the Village Institute has been changed to the current Clerks address. Noted

Nick Wright has been booked onto the basic Councillor training course in November. Noted

Derek Robinson has been booked onto the Highways forum for flooding and along with Nick Wright for the Highways winter maintenance forum. Noted

A Parishioner asked if 2 more not suitable for HGV signs could be looked at for Higham Road – Highways have advised that they have been out and assessed Higham Road and there are 6 signs on the highway advising drivers that the road is unsuitable for HGVs or wide loads. The officers observation on site was that the yellow backed safety signs (Bend Warning and Reduce Speed Now), Not suitable for HGV sign and the sharp bend in advance of School Lane / Green Lane from the Higham direction on the northwest side is obscured with vegetation and they have been able to gain approval for works here to get this greenery all cut back from the edge of the carriageway and around the signs. This has a lead time of approx. 20 working days under La 323195. Discussed under agenda item 05.11.24

An email has been received from a resident with regards to a dangerous structure – wall adjoining Mill House, Lower Street - the wall is sags and has a large central area where bricks are completely un-mortared and could be removed easily from the body of the wall. Cllr D Robinson has reported this to Babergh, Cllr Davies to revert to the resident.

An email has been received from Dedham Vale Society asking for a donation – PC agreed to agenda this item for January's meeting to discuss. Clerk

14.11.24 Finance

(1) To approve the expenditure since the last meeting and to receive a financial report from the RFO including balances at bank. The expenditure sheet, financial report, bank statements, accounts and reconciliations were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting – copy of expenditure sheet and financial report are attached to the minutes. Proposed by the Cllr D Robinson, seconded by Cllr Shead, all in favour. **Decision** – expenditure of £5,926.07 from 10.09.24 to 11.11.24 and balance at the bank at 31.10.2024 - current account is £8,692.75 with £3,549.67 uncashed cheques and the reserve account £16,868.40 was approved by all.

Cllr D Robinson queried the payment of £120 to Community Heartbeat. Investigations to be made and Clerk will put cheque on hold.

(2) Monthly cashflow analysis against agreed Precept. Cllr Wright proposed to accept, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour.

(3) Monthly cashflow reserves. No comment



(4) **Changing bank accounts to Barclays bank** – Barclays Bank are waiting for further details from one of the proposed signatories on the account and will then issue forms to be completed.
(5) **Precept for 25-26 and budget** – a draft budget was circulated to the Cllrs before the meeting. PC in agreement that the precept will need to be increased for 25-26. Cllrs / Clerk to work on the draft budget and finalise for agreement at January's meeting. Agreement to be made on a budget to support the VI Committee. **Clerk / Cllrs**

15.11.24 Grass cutting

Cllr G Robinson is waiting for Babergh to send through their grass cutting schedule for next year and PC will continue to have the option of interim cuts. Vertas have quoted £300 per cut for 4 interim cuts – Clerk to check what the charge would be for one off cuts and their flexibility. Interim 4 cuts are to be added to next year's budget. **Clerk**

16.11.24 The River Garden

Licence renewal to be discussed before signing.

Northumbrian Water have indicated:

1. New licence will now run to November 2025 and are considering a longer-term arrangement
2. Expenditure for the purchase and installation of a collapsible bollard at £308.44 including VAT for had been agreed at a previous meeting, but last meeting put it on hold pending resolution of licence issues. An email has been sent to Savills with questions on some of the conditions in the licence and the PC are awaiting a response. **Clerk**

17.11.24 Electric Pylons campaign – National Grid Norwich to Tilbury project

No updates received

The Chairman proposed an agenda item for January – donation to the Pylon Campaign Group. **Clerk**

18.11.24 Village Institute and Institute Committee

Play area – The Chairman and Cllr G Robinson are arranging a meeting with the VI Committee to discuss the hand over and to discuss what financial support the VI Committee will require going forward.

19.11.24 Scheduled Councillor walks / Village works action plan

Update to be given. Agreed to defer to January's meeting. **GR**

Village works action plan – Cllr D Robinson has created a spreadsheet for a schedule of works to be completed by volunteers. Volunteers do not have to be Cllrs they can also be villagers. **DR**

20.11.24 Promotion of the Parish Council

At the last meeting it was agreed to produce a paper survey – update to be given. Agreed to defer to January's meeting. **GR**

21.11.24 Refurbishment of the Village sign

Cllr D Robinson has obtained a quote of approx. £1,000 to refurbish the village sign and proposed that if funding could be obtained then to go ahead with this. County Cllr Hall and District Cllr Ward have advised that they will look at their locality budgets and revert if they are able to assist. **DR**

22.11.24 Stour Paddlers Guidebook

River Access Points Content – PC discussed and are happy with the content proposed. **Clerk**

23.11.24 Village volunteer ride service

It is noted that the call for volunteer transport is not a taxi service as no charges are to be made. Notice placed in the Quartet – one enquiry received from a resident asking for more information about volunteering. Clerk to revert to resident thanking them for their interest and advising that we need a few more volunteers at this point. Cllr Davies advised that Langham and Boxted have a Good neighbourhood scheme which assists with transporting people. All in agreement for Cllr Davies to contact Langham and Boxted to ask for more information on this scheme and revert back at the next meeting. Cllr D Robinson to also put an advert of Facebook. **BD/DR**

24.11.24 Higham Road

Update on repair work to the ditch and discuss a Parishioners proposal of having 2 signs one either



end of the road stating not suitable for heavy goods vehicles and having a speed limit on the sharp bend at the Higham end – update given by County Cllr Hall on agenda item 05.11.24.

Vegetation maintenance on Higham Road between Yew Tree House and the gate to the adjoining field. County Cllr Hall advised that this should be reported on the SCC Highways reporting tool. **BD**

25.11.24 Chevrons outside Low Hill House

This agenda item was covered by County Cllr Hall in agenda item 05.11.24.

26.11.24 Parish Council meetings

All in agreement to trial monthly PC meetings except in August and December from January – Cllr Wright proposed, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

27.11.24 Purchase of 30mph wheelie bin stickers

The PC have no more 30mph wheelie bin stickers and there has been a request from a resident for one. Cllr Shead proposed purchasing 12 stickers with expenditure of £25, Cllr G Robinson seconded, all in favour. Cllr Davies abstained from the vote. **DR**

28.11.24 Website and email addresses

There is a recommendation for PCs to change to a gov.uk website and email addresses, the PC currently have Stratfordstmary.org.uk email address. Cllr D Robinson raised whether the price for web hosting and conversion to [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) addresses would be cheaper with CAS - Community Action Suffolk - but it was established this would not be significant. It seems some councils use their personal email addresses. Cllr Shead would review at next renewal.

29.11.24 Slow down signs on Strickmere

Dedham have slow down signs designed by the local school children and there is an estate agent who is sponsoring this and providing the frames and posts to display the signs. Noted from the public forum that proposal is for signs to be village wide. The PC are to ask estate agents to sponsor and ask the school if they would like to be involved. Estate agents Palmers, Kingsley and Griers to be approached. **Clerk**

30.11.24 Millennium Avenue – tree pruning

Expenditure has been previously approved of £1,155 for Blands to carry out the work however Highways have advised that traffic management is required or a NRSWA accredited company. Traffic management quote received from Blands of £950. Proposal to go back to Highways to ask if they have a list of NRSWA accredited tree surgeons in our area so more quotes can be obtained. **Clerk**

31.11.24 Confirm a date for the Annual Parish Meeting 2025

All in agreement to hold the APM on Monday the 28th of April 2025. **Clerk**.

32.11.24 Stratford St Mary Community Trust

One of the trustees for the SSM Community Trust has stepped down so the Trust are looking for A replacement. The Chairman proposed Cllr G Robinson to stand as a trustee, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour.

33.11.24 Milestone outside the water pumping station

Distance to Chelmsford is 9 miles but should be 29 miles – Cllr G Robinson proposed to purchase a metal number 2 for £10, Cllr Shead second and all in favour. **GR**

34.11.24 Large tree on Strickmere opposite no 4 Strickmere

A resident has questioned how often this tree is inspected / pruned – PC in agreement that this needs to be reported on the SCC reporting tool. **RB**

35.11.24 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

None



36.11.24 Confirm the date of the 13th of January 2025 at 1930hrs for the next Parish Council Meeting. The meeting date of the 13th of January 2025 was confirmed.

Meeting closed at 2115hrs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Small', located in the bottom right corner of the page.

FINANCIAL REPORT

to 31.10.2024

Balance at bank Current Acc

£8,692.75

Uncashed cheques £3,549.67

Balance in Reserve

£16,868.40

Interest Earned Reserve Acc

£35.50

Receipts since last meeting

£8,169.13

£8,050 precept and £119.13 reimbursement from SCC for tools

		PLANNED EXP.	ACTUAL SPEND TO DATE	DIFF - PLAN/ACT
General Admin	Audit	400.00	250.00	150.00
	Chairman's Expenses	125.00	0.00	125.00
	Clerk's Salary	7,800.00	4,550.00	3,250.00
	Clerk's Expense and room use	450.00	207.10	242.90
	Internet Use	120.00	70.00	50.00
	Software/Computer equip Microsoft	79.99	79.99	0.00
S137 Donations	S.137 Allowances	2,000.00	2,705.00	-705.00
Playground	Inspection	500.00	2,385.60	-1,885.60
	Maintenance / repairs			
	Bark replacement	200.00	3,345.60	-3,145.60
Village Maintenance	Tree Maintenance	450.00	0.00	450.00
	Institute Grass Cutting	874.00	733.56	140.44
	Millennium Garden Grass cutting	100.00	42.00	58.00
	Millennium Ave & River Garden Grass cutting/Maintenance	1,600.00	1,478.60	121.40
	Litter pick			
	Village Sign Maintenance			
	Village Institute maintenance			
	Litter /grit bins/Dog bins			
Subscriptions/Training/Publications	SALC Membership	380	273.79	106.21
	SLCC - Clerk's Subscriptions	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Open spaces	500.00	397.08	102.92
	Community Action Suffolk			
	Comm Action Suffolk Website			
	CommuniCorp			
	Training			
	Publications/ICO DataProt/Internet			
Institute/Parish Room Hire	Institute Hire/Parish Room Hire	173.00	69.00	104.00
Village Lighting / maintenance contract	Lighting/Maintenance	1,538.00	3,142.92	-1,604.92
Insurance	Insurance	605.00	631.72	-26.72
River Garden noticeboard rent	River Garden noticeboard rent			
Misc	Misc.	500.00	303.65	196.35
Admin	Admin	350.00	163.98	186.02
Dog/litter bins emptying	Dog/Litter Bins Emptying	1,311.00	1,159.20	151.80
Village Emergency telephone system	Emergency Planning	120.00	0.00	120.00
Wreath	Wreath	18.00	20.00	-2.00
Speed gun expenses	Speed Gun expenses	200.00	3,523.07	-3,323.07
Speed signage	Speed signage			
Parish Election Costs	Parish Election Costs	135.00	0.00	135.00
	TOTALS	20,528.99	25,531.86	-5,002.87

Purchase of a new speed sign, Georgia Hall has given £500 towards this and VAT reclaim will be £468. Money from reserves being used for this purchase

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11/11/24