

STANSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th March 2019

Councillors present: Sarah Hopkins (Chairman), John Underdown, Ed Cardozo, Robert Dennis, Martin Slater and Andrew Foster.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk), County Councillor Mary Evans, Borough Councillor Peter Stevens, Richard Sykes-Popham from Carter Jonas in Cambridge and one member of the public.

Open Forum

The following issues were raised during the open forum

Richard Sykes-Popham explained that the reason for his visit is to make the Parish Council aware of proposals for a small development of five new homes next to Pippin Post Close in Stansfield and to seek informal views before a formal planning application is submitted. The last Village Review showed support for 1 – 5 news dwellings in the village. Two of the properties would be offered at reduced market rent and three at open market rent. The aim is to offer the homes to people with a Stansfield connection.

The aim of the design is to limit the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The closest boundary will be 20 metres away. The design has been inspired by a traditional farmstead layout. The proposals will also include a community orchard and a public open space. The properties will be made out of natural timber boarding and brick.

They will be running a public consultation on 5th April in Stansfield Village Hall. Richard Popham Sykes is happy for people to contact him by email if they have any queries.

Questions

- Will the public footpath be affected? No, the alignment of the public footpath hasn't changed.
- Will this be phase one and lead to future development? No this will be it. The plan is to complete Pippin Post Close and no more.
- Is the site outside the Housing Settlement Boundary? Yes
- Has pre-application advice been sought from West Suffolk Council? No discussions have not been held with Planning at this stage. The site has been submitted though as part of the Council's call for sites.
- Would it be possible to move the orchard and public space to the other end of the development to minimise the impact on neighbouring properties? Richard Sykes-Popham said they could look into this.
- Could they look into building bungalows, again to reduce the impact on neighbouring properties? Yes, they can look into this.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda or dispensations requests.

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda or requested a dispensation.

3. Approval of minutes of the meeting on Monday 21st January 2019

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

4. County Councillor' report

Mary Evans spoke about the following:

- Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is asking the public for views on how it manages the service on issues ranging from how it responds to automatic fire alarms, to firefighters' shift patterns. The consultation runs from Monday 11th February to Sunday 7th April 2019.
- Bury Leisure Centre has become the first Exercise Referral Scheme in Suffolk to be awarded a new county-wide quality standard. Exercise referral schemes enable GPs and health professionals to refer patients with long term health conditions to a fitness programme based within the community, to increase their physical activity levels as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Suffolk County Council has now set its budget for the year at £520m. Council tax will increase by 2.99% and there will also be a social care levy of 1% - the total increase is 1% less than last year. The budget for adult social care is £243m and Suffolk County Council is spending £111m on children's services.

- SCC highways won a grant of £4.4m from the Government for a pioneering project to develop “smart” streetlighting. The project will see the introduction of streetlights equipped with wind vanes and solar panels, so they generate rather than consume energy.
- She is setting up a councillor review group to look at highways’ issues such as the reporting tool. One of the other areas they will be assessing will be this year’s winter gritting programme and the grit bin policy and she would like councillors to send her their comments.

5. Borough Councillor’s report

Peter Stevens spoke about the following

- The West Suffolk hub is nearly finished.
- The Local Plan is to be revised.
- This will be his last meeting at Stansfield Parish Council. He will be standing for election for the Withersfield and Thurlow ward. Councillors thanked him for all his help and support in his role as Borough councillor.

6. Police issues

No police issues were raised.

7. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting

There were five outstanding councillor actions.

8. Finance

a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- J P Kirk - expenses – LGA 1972, s111 – **£13.04**
- Ousden Parish Council – $\frac{1}{6}$ of cost of elections training for clerk - LGA 1972, s111 - **£4.16**
- Stansfield Village Hall - Rental of village hall for meetings - LGA 1972, s111 - **£180.00**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 – **£2.40**
- LCPAS – annual subscription - LGA 1972, s111 - **£90.00**

John Underdown and Andrew Foster signed the Schedule of Payments and invoices. The Chairman then countersigned it.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Receipts and payments (including online payments made since the last meeting)

Receipts		Details		Amount
04/12/18		Suffolk County Council - locality funding for bench		£500.00
02/01/19		Donations for the defibrillator		£490.00
08/02/19		Donations for the defibrillator		£807.76
Payments	Minute reference	Details	Method	Amount
10/01/19	102/7f	Fidelity Funds Network	Online	£10.00
16/01/19	113/8a	HMRC	Online	£2.20
22/01/19	119/7a	Risby Parish Council - 1/6 of cost of a print cartridge	Online	£5.82
22/01/19	119/7a	JP Kirk - expenses	Online	£12.62
30/01/19	107/8o	Staff costs	S/O	
28/02/19	107/8o	Staff costs	S/O	

Sarah Hopkins has received more donations for the defibrillator and has paid £200 into the Parish Council bank account.

d) Bank balances and confirmation of bank reconciliation

Bank balance as of 28th February 2019: £5,485.96

John Underdown checked and signed the bank reconciliations as correct.

e) Signatory to complete the checklist of Internal Controls

John Underdown completed the checklist of internal controls.

b) Review of all regular payments including the clerk's salary and approval of payments relating to these services for 2019-20

It was resolved the following regular payments would continue to be paid in 2019 - 20:

Payment	2018/19	2019/20	Notes
Community Action Suffolk - Insurance	£189	£189	
Subscriptions:			
LCPAS	£80	£90	
Risby Parish Council - phone costs	£21	£21	
CAS Ltd - website hosting fee	£60	£60	
HMRC - PAYE	£10	£10	Amount may vary slightly
Clerk's salary	£2,666	£2,845	Monthly payment, amount may vary slightly if PAYE paid. Amount higher in 2016/17 because of transparency grant money paid
Risby PC – monthly payment to cover pension costs for clerk	£120	£120	
Strimming of chapel ground	£120	£120	Amount may vary depending on weather conditions and number of cuts
Stansfield Village Hall - rental for meetings	£180	£180	
ICO - data protection registration	£35	£35	
St Edmundsbury Borough Council - fortnightly emptying of dog bins	£76	£76	

c) Revised contract of employment for the clerk and job description

It was resolved that the revised contract and job description would be approved. The Chairman and clerk then signed it.

d) PAYE details and tax code for the clerk's salary

John Underdown reviewed the clerk's Confidential Cashbook and confirmed that the PAYE details and tax code were correct.

e) Review of the income and expenditure for 2018/19 against the budget and the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure

Councillors reviewed the income and expenditure for 2018/19 against the budget. At year-end Stansfield Parish Council will have a budget surplus of approximately £1,245. This is made up mainly of donations for a new defibrillator (£1,298).

Estimated reserve as of 31/03/19: £3,684 which includes allocated funds of £2,105. The general reserve is within the guidelines of no more than one year's annual precept.

f) Review the register of fixed assets and insurance values

Councillors reviewed the assets register. One new asset was added in 2018/19 – the memorial bench.

g) Review of the Council's Risk Assessment

It was resolved that no amendments were necessary. The Chairman then signed it.

h) Liability insurance

The Council has the following levels of liability cover:

- Public liability cover: £10,000,000
- Personal accident: £25,000
- Employee dishonesty: £25,000
- Employer's liability (clerk only) £10,000,000

It was resolved that Employer's Liability Cover for one additional person would be added to ensure that cover is in place for volunteers/residents who occasionally carry out work for the Council. The cost will be approximately £6 per person.

i) Appointment of an internal auditor to complete the Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19 and review of the effectiveness of the internal audit

It was resolved that Cathy Whitaker, clerk to Exning Parish Council, would be appointed as internal auditor this year and that a fee of £65 would be paid. The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. It was resolved that the internal audit was effective and that audit regulations would be met for the following reasons:

- Does the internal audit sufficiently cover all aspects of the financial controls relevant to the council (for example risk management, detection of fraud, internal controls) and are terms of reference in place and approved? Yes. New Financial Regulations were adopted on 1st May 2014 to introduce procedures to detect fraud when using electronic banking. A checklist of internal controls is completed by a councillor at every meeting to verify payments on bank statements against actual payments as listed in the accounts to ensure that there are no discrepancies.
- Is the internal auditor independent (i.e. does not have any role within the Council)? Yes. The internal auditor does not have a role within the Council.
- Is the internal auditor competent to carry out their work ethically, with integrity and objectivity? Is there any evidence to suggest that this may not be the case? Yes, she is a parish council clerk and RFO for Newmarket Town Council. There is no evidence to suggest that she will not carry out the work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.
- Is the Responsible Officer consulted in the internal audit plan? Yes.
- Are the responsibilities of members of the Council understood and has the necessary training been undertaken? Yes
- Is there a plan in place for when the internal audit will be undertaken and does the plan properly take account of corporate risk? The internal audit will take place in April 2019 prior to the accounts being approved at the Annual Meeting on 13th May 2019. The internal auditor's report will be presented to the Parish Council at this meeting and any issues raised by the internal auditor will be discussed at the meeting and an action plan produced.

j) To review the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls

The following internal controls are in place:

- At each meeting a councillor checks bank statements against the Parish Council's accounts to ensure that transactions correspond and that the bank reconciliation agrees with the bank statement
- Where possible payments are approved at meetings and a Schedule of Payments is prepared which is checked by two councillors. Corresponding invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the same time.
- Regular payments are approved at the March meeting and the invoices paid when they are received. These invoices are checked and signed by two councillors at the next meeting after they have been paid.
- The chairman rules off and signs the Schedule of Payments so that no amendments can be made after the meeting.
- Cheques must be signed by two signatories along with the corresponding invoice.
- A record of online payments is kept and checked at each meeting.
- If a supplier changes their bank details, the supplier must supply a written hard copy notifying the change.

It was resolved that these controls are adequate and are working well.

k) Appointment of a councillor to inspect the Council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2019 and complete the inspection checklist.

Andrew Foster has inspected the Council's property. The village sign is leaning slightly and needs to be checked. Sarah Hopkins agreed to do this.

l) To review the complex bank mandate at Barclays

It was resolved that this item would be deferred until the next meeting after the elections.

9. Planning

- a) **DC/19/0369/LB - Plough House, Plough Hill, Stansfield - LBA (i) Glaze open side elevations of porch (ii) Install door to existing door opening.**
It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.
- b) **Planning update. From 1st May paper copies will no longer be sent to parish councils**
From 1st May paper copies of planning applications will no longer be sent to parish councils. From 1st May paper copies will no longer be sent to parish councils. It was resolved that the clerk would email all planning notifications to councillors and that they would check the applications online.
- c) **Submitting responses to planning applications online**
It was resolved that all future responses to planning applications would be submitted online via the West Suffolk planning portal.

10. Highways/Rights of Way issues/tree/transport issues

- a) **VAS assessment**
It was resolved that this item would be postponed until the next meeting.
- b) **Email from Suffolk County Council re changes to school transport and the need for families to opt-in by 31st May 2019 if they require school transport**
It was resolved that details would be included in the next newsletter.
- c) **Email from Connecting Communities confirming that from 1 April 2019 all Connecting Communities passengers will be charged fares, and free bus passes will no longer be accepted.**
It was resolved that details would be included in the next newsletter.

11. Parish Elections on 2nd May 2019

- a) **Nomination forms**
The councillors present completed nomination forms for the forthcoming elections on 2nd May 2019. Martin Slater has decided not to stand for re-election. The Chair thanked him for all his hard work during his time on the Parish Council.
- b) **Letter from West Suffolk re cost of an uncontested in May 2019 and from 2020**
The cost of an uncontested election will remain the same as in 2015 at **£21.34**, however from 2020 the cost will increase to **£64.70**
- c) **Pre-election Purdah**
Purdah relates to the period leading up to an election, when councils must take extra care when considering their publishing obligations. Parish councils must not publish, arrange for or give financial support to the publication of any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. The period begins with the notice of election on 22nd March and ends on election day (10 pm on 2nd May).

12. Village issues

- a) **Request from the Bridge Club for faster broadband in the village hall**
It was resolved that this item would be postponed until more information has been received.
- b) **Update on progress of proposal to improve the mobile phone signal in Stansfield following meeting with James Cartlidge MP**
This item is ongoing.
- c) **Quotes for strimming the chapel burial ground**
Robert Dennis agreed to arrange for the chapel burial ground to be strimmed. The clerk agreed to ask Ken Hutchinson for a quote as well.
- d) **Suggestion to build a fitness trail on the playing field**
It was resolved that this item would be postponed until after the May elections.

13. Correspondence

- a) **Email from West Suffolk asking to support the Rural Service Network campaign to publish a rural strategy.**
It was resolved that the clerk would submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council supporting the RSN campaign.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.24pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated