

STANSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th March 2022

Councillors present: Ed Cardozo (Vice-chairman), Julie Ghirardani, Fran Brown and Fay Gridley.

Also present: Sally Allen (clerk) and 6 members of the public.

In the absence of the Chairman, Ed Cardozo chaired the meeting.

1. To accept apologies and reason for absence.

Apologies were received from Sarah Hopkins (Chairman), Robert Dennis and John Underdown. The reason for absences accepted.

2. Declaration of interest by councillors in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

No councillor's declared an interest in any items on the agenda. No dispensation requests were received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17th January 2022

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

4. Public Session (15 minutes)

The following issues were raised:

- Residents are unhappy with how long it is taking for the Housing Needs Survey.
- Resident access to Parish council Meetings by Zoom, when unable to attend in person for health reasons
- Residents suggested the creation of a community engagement policy to allow residents to have more input into decisions regarding the village. A working party was suggested.

5. County Councillor's Report

Bobby Bennett sent a written report prior to the meeting. The report is available on the parish council's website at: <http://Stansfield.onesuffolk.net/meeting-reports/14-march-2022/>

She also spoke about the following:

- Bobby is now cabinet member for Equality and Communities, which covers various areas
- Avian Flu has been reported in the local areas. Those with poultry and caged birds are asked to keep them undercover for longer. Updates can be found on the government website.

6. District Councillor's report

Sarah Pugh sent a written report prior to the meeting. The report is available on the parish council's website at: <http://stansfield.onesuffolk.net/meeting-reports/14-march-2022/>

She also spoke about the following:

- Local councillor David Roach will be holding Roadshow's in the local areas. These will be open to residents and councillor's and will give the opportunity to raise concerns with issues in the village. It was resolved that Stansfield would host a roadshow for nearby villages.
- The village hall will be receiving £850 to fit a hearing loop system. This has come from the Locality funds.

7. Police issues

There have been a few post box thefts in the local villages. Luckily Stansfield was not affected. Once police and social media were involved the thefts ceased.

8. To receive an update on the list of actions agreed at the last meeting

Councillors:

Ed Cardozo will be distributing the Emergency plan leaflets to the village. Julie Ghirardani offered to help.

Clerk:

There are no outstanding clerks actions

9. To discuss the following financial issues:

a) Approval of payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- S Allen – Refund for Safeguarding Conference – LGA 1972 – s111 - **£5**
- S Allen – Clerks expenses (Mileage for January meeting, paper and file dividers for Audit and year end) – LGA 1973 – s111 - **£20.16**

Fran brown and Julie Ghirardani signed the Schedule of payments.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings

No payments were authorised between meetings

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting

Receipts

No receipts were received since the previous meeting

Payments

Date	Description	Supplier	Minute Ref	Total
08/03/2022	Website Hosting	CAS	190/9f	60.00
08/03/2022	Phone costs	EE Mobile	182/1	19.20
08/02/2022	Phone costs	EE Mobile	182/1	19.20
08/02/2022	Phone costs	EE Mobile	182/1	19.20
28/01/2022	Clerk's expenses	J Kirk	183/9a	38.99
23/02/2022	Clerk's expenses	S A Allen	182/9a	52.04

Staff costs as per confidential cashbook

d) Bank balances as of 28th February 2022 and confirmation of bank reconciliation

Barclays current account	£1,258.96
Barclays reserve account	£3,004.79
Total in Banks	£4263.75

Fran Brown and Julie Ghirardani verified and signed the bank statements.

e) Signatory to complete the checklist of internal controls

Fran Brown and Julie Ghirardani signed the checklist of controls.

f) To review the income and expenditure for 2021/22 against the budget and discuss the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure

Budget Summary 2021 – 2022

Receipts	
Budgeted	5597
Actual	5722.11
Difference	-£125.11
Payments	
Budgeted	5597
Actual	7027.22
Difference	-1430.22
Overspends	
Subscriptions	
Budgeted	200
Actual	259.51
Difference - Scribe and SALC yearly increase	-59.51

Clerks Expenses	
Budgeted	150
Actual	161.41
Difference - New clerk started in November 2021. Expenses for new clerk to set up	-£11.41
Phone Costs	
Budgeted	23
Actual	49.03
Difference - New clerk started so new phone contract started as previous clerks phone was not Stansfield PC's	-26.03
Salaries	
Budgeted	£2,900.00
Actual	£3,006.67
Difference - New clerk started in December 2021. Handover period between the two clerks so two salaries paid for two months	-£106.67
Insurance	
Budgeted	£176
Actual	£198.97
Difference - New insurance policy through CAS	-£22.97
Training	
Budgeted	£20
Actual	£25
Difference – New clerk, planning training	-£5

It was resolved that the councillors reviewed the income and expenditure for 2021/2022 against the budget. The estimated reserve as of 31/03/2022 is £4561.33. The general reserve is within the guidelines of no more than one year's annual precept.

Reserves

<u>Reserve</u>	<u>OpeningBalance</u>	<u>Transfers</u>	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>CurrentBalance</u>
Earmarked					
Election costs	528.00				528.00
Chapel Grounds Maintenance	559.00				559.00
Village project	500.00				500.00
Defibrillator maintenance	371.00				371.00
Housing Needs Survey	2,500.00	-2,288.55			211.45
Stansfield Cemetery Wildlife	103.33				103.33

Total Earmarked	4,561.33	-2,288.55	2,272.78
TOTAL RESERVE	4,561.33	-2,288.55	2,272.78
GENERAL FUND			1,722.61
TOTAL FUNDS			3,995.39

g) Councillor to review the confidential cashbook (PAYE and salary information)

Fran Brown and Julie Ghirardani reviewed the clerk's confidential cashbook and confirmed the PAYE details and tax code were correct.

h) To review the register of fixed assets and insurance values and check that the level of insurance cover is adequate

It was resolved that the levels of liability cover were adequate.

The levels of Liability cover under the new Parish Protect policy are as follows:

All Risks/	Public Liability	Officers Indemnity	Fidelity Guarantee (Dishonesty)	Business Interruption	Personal Accident	Employers' Liability
£75k	£10m	£1m	£25k	£5k	£25k	£10m

The parish council's asset's current value is £6610.67 which is within the current insurance band of £20,000

i) A councillor to inspect the council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2022 and complete an inspection checklist

It was resolved that Sarah Hopkins would inspect the council's property

j) To review the Council's risk assessment

It was resolved that no amendments were necessary. The Vice chairman signed them

k) To appoint an internal auditor to check the Council's system of internal controls and review the effectiveness of the internal audit. The internal auditor must be independent from the Parish Council.

It was resolved that Stansfield PC would appoint SALC internal Auditor this year and the fee of £161 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 internet 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 (is 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 this may not be the case? Yes. The internal auditor works for SALC and completes audit's for various parish councils. There is no evidence they 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 2022 prior to the accounts being approved at the Annual Meeting on 16th May 2022. 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.

l) 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 January 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 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.

10. To discuss the Early Day Motion registered by an MP regarding Bullying and Harassment by Councillors

An early day motion was registered by an MP calling for government to establish an appropriate and effective sanctions mechanism to deal with local councillors who have been found guilty of bullying and harassment following an independent investigation. The MP was alerted to the issue when an ALCC (Association of Local council clerks) member contacted him to report an issue. They are asking for as many people as possible to contact your local MP regarding this and there has been a template letter issued for sending. It was resolved that Stansfield PC would reply individually and that Sally would provide the template letter to those requiring it.

11. To discuss any highways/Rights of Way issues/tree/transport issues

a) VAS assessment

Temporary VAS were deployed on Plough Hill and Upper Street on 11 February 2022 and remain in place until further notice.

b) Update on the Quiet Lanes Project

Email received to advise work has been planned for the new posts to be erected soon. Gosland Green site is going to be repeater signs and is included in the Poslingford proposals. The parish contribution for Stansfield is £100. A Parish council representative has been asked to add the signage to existing or new posts. It was resolved that Ed Cardozo would erect the signage.

Ed Signed the QLS Agreement and Sally will return the signed document.

Fay Gridley raised a query on behalf of a resident from Hawkedon regarding a new post.

c) Highways update

It was resolved that Fay Gridley will be SPC Highways and footpaths Officer.

She gave the following update:

- Repeat drainage problem at Lower Street has now been added to the councils planned program of root cutting works. This should be carried out within 3-6 months. Once completed, reactive jetting will be carried out to ensure the system is clear and functioning.
- The Bridge on Bridleway 15 is rotten. This has now been fenced off and is waiting repair
- Gosland Green - Erosion of verges. This has been checked and at present no work required.

d) Update on the Lorry routes survey

No further update available currently.

e) Update on Bee Orchids

The Roadside Nature Reserves team would love to survey the bits of verge with Orchids on once spring is underway, to carry out a formal assessment and see if it's something that can be added to the RNR project. It was resolved the PC would like the assessment to be carried out. Sally to liaise with the RNR team

12. Update on the Housing needs Survey

As stated in the executive summary issued to all households, the survey identified a housing need in Stansfield, however, no decision has been made yet about the way forward. Stansfield PC are waiting to have face to face discussions with the Housing needs team. Any future decisions will be made at PC meetings which will be advertised in the usual way.

13. To approve the following GDPR information:**a) Social media policy**

It was resolved the Social media policy was approved and should be added onto the website.

14. To discuss any village issues**a) Defibrillator**

Stansfield have been asked to supply monthly reporting. The last recorded report was July 2021. It was resolved that Richard Evans would check and report in March and then Sarah Hopkins will check going forward, with Sally reporting online. In the absence of Sarah, Richard Evans will check and report.

b) Update on Queens Green Canopy Project Tree planting

There is a woodland project underway in the village and they are replacing tree's which have been removed. Sally will pass on information regarding the Queens Green canopy project tree planting to Julie Ghirardani who can then pass on the information to the Woodland team in the village, who were holding a meeting later in the week.

c) Update regarding Queens Jubilee Celebrations

Sarah Hopkins is organising a Jubilee buffet lunch celebration on Sunday 5th June 2022 at the Stansfield Village Hall. Various donations have been kindly offered. The Parish council resolved to buy a Jubilee mug for each child in the village and this will be given out on the day. It was resolved that the more modern design mug would be ordered by Sally at a cost of £114 for 30 mugs. Numbers for the event will be needed.

There will be an Easter egg trail and dog walk in April which is to raise funds for the Jubilee celebration. Posters have been created and Sally will start an online advertising campaign. The Parish council insurance covers PC run events if there are no more than 750 attendees and no hazardous activities/bouncy castle/fireworks at the event.

15. To discuss any correspondence**a) Suffolk Accident Rescue service Thank you letter for the donation and report**

A letter of thanks was received and a full report.

b) Email from resident asking if the Parish council are organising a litter pick

Residents have carried out litter picks in some areas of the village. It was resolved a full litter pick should be carried out before the Jubilee Celebrations. Sally to advertise for volunteers to run this. Equipment will be ordered from the council once details confirmed.

c) Email from resident regarding residents contribution to, and inclusion about the future of the village, in particular relating to housing needs in the village

Regarding the housing needs survey, as stated in the executive summary issued to all households, the survey identified a housing need in Stansfield, however, no decision has been made yet about the way forward. Any future decisions will be made at a PC meeting which will be advertised in the usual way. Any future decisions would be based on the findings of the Housing needs survey. Stansfield Parish council are awaiting the final version of the full report.

d) Email from resident requesting Zoom access to meetings when unable to attend in person

There is no legal obligation to offer this and we do not have the technical ability to run hybrid Zoom meetings. However, we have requested that the Village Hall install a hearing loop for those in attendance.

e) Email from a resident asking quantity of names currently listed with an interest of becoming parish councillors

Two residents expressed an interest when the vacancies were discussed. No positions are currently available. This was discussed in previous meetings.

f) Email from a resident regarding the PC's current position on recording of and reporting on, the public sessions during a Parish council meeting

Public sessions are not part of the main meeting and there is no requirement legally to hold a public session. Please see our standing orders which state: The open forum is not part of the main meeting and should not be filmed or recorded without the consent of members of the public present. No names are recorded, only the question asked is noted for discussion at future meeting. This was discussed at previous meetings.

16. Safeguarding

Sally and Fay were nominated as Safeguarding officers in January 2022, Fay has now stepped down. It was resolved that Fran Brown would now be a Safeguarding officer along with Sally. Fran has already completed training for this. Sally will confirm with SALC if Fran needs to complete training in her role as councillor

17. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 16th May 2022 at 7pm and the Annual meeting of the Parish at 8pm.

- Resident has asked for the creation of a community engagement policy, they state such a policy would also seek to ensure residents have appropriate, timely and regular opportunities to give their views on both immediate and longer term issues, and that residents are encouraged pro-actively to do so. They also suggested a Working party for residents and asked if a representative of the PC could be a part of this. Sally to check with SALC before the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.03pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated