

Minutes of the Council General Meeting held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present Cllrs Barnes R (Chair), Barnes P, Corlett, Ball, Spillett, Pallett, Slater, SCC Cllr. Bennett,
Anne Lines(Clerk), David Lines (former locum clerk) and four members of the public,

24.5.8

1. Welcome from the Chair and formal notice about recording of the meeting

The Chair reviewed the council's activities during the civic year 2023 – 2024

2. Election and acceptance of the Chair of the Parish Council for the coming year..

Councillor Rex Barnes was re-elected and accepted the office of Chair and made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Cllr Andrew Pallett was re-elected and accepted as Vice-Chair and made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. RESOLVED – to accept apologies for absence WSC Cllr Pugh.

RESOLVED – To Receive delegated Declarations of interest Dispensation decisions or APPROVE such dispensation requests where required– NONE.

Members were reminded that if it becomes clear that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Pecuniary or Registrable Non Pecuniary Interest when considering any of the matters covered by the Agenda, they must declare it.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED - to approve the minutes of 13th March 2024 as a true and accurate record. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

5. Public Forum. *The Chair invited members of the public to indicate whether they wished to speak at the meeting, either on an item on the Agenda or on a general matter. Public questions were permitted for 15 minutes public may ask questions relating to the work and services of the Council. Questions may not always be answered and are generally permitted to 3 minutes per person, at the discretion of the Chair.* **NONE.**

6. County, District and Parish Councillor's Reports

(a) Cllr Bobbie Bennett (Suffolk County Council) gave the following report :

- Cllr Bennetts report included that at the recent County Council AGM she had been allocated to a new division under Children and Young People.
- She had attended a forum with a visit from Swedish Social Care where they have similar challenges to those in the UK and who wanted to learn from Suffolk's adult and children's social care services which are highly rated.
- She said almost all (99%) of children had been given their first or second choice primary school places in the county. (93% being given their first choice).
- Special needs education in Suffolk was not up to required standard and they were taking steps to remedy this, including appointing a specialist.
- SCC had secured a fund of £7.3million to improve the electric vehicle charging network in the county. And a programme of 400 road upgrades was in progress.
- She announced a survey to find out people's Preferences for Nature, including what their favourite places for nature are in the county

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(b) Cllr Sarah Pugh (West Suffolk District Council) gave the following report:

Planning Locality Budget

I have been pleased to support two projects in Stansfield from my Locality Budget - £200 to the Stansfield Bloomers and £300 to a Memorial for the late Cllr Mary Evans. My budget for the coming year is sadly reduced but I will do my utmost to support what I can. Please can I remind you to seek support for the expenditure before you commit to it as there may be other ways of responding to your needs as a parish.

Jon Eaton, our former Locality Officer, has had a change of role and our new Locality Officer will be Chris Swarbrick. Chris can be contacted at chris.swarbrick@westsuffolk.gov.uk

I have no current planning applications for Stansfield.

(c) Reports from the Parish Councillors – NONE

7. End of Year Financial Reports

RESOLVED the Annual Financial Reports, including the Bank Reconciliation of 31st March 2024 approved and signed by the Chair. To be posted on the website on or before July 1st, 2024.

8. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

(a) **APPROVED** the Internal Audit Report for 2023/2024 and signed by the Chair. To be posted on the website on or before July 1st, 2024.

(b) **APPROVED** the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024 and signed by the Chair. To be posted on the website on or before July 1st, 2024.

(c) **APPROVED** the Accounting Statement for 2023/2024 and signed by the Chair. To be posted on the website on or before July 1st, 2024.

(d) The council was **INFORMED** that the Internal Audit Review is scheduled for the week commencing June 24th 2024.

9. Planning and Development

CONSIDERED any planning applications received by the Council for comment, including those received after the publication of this agenda - **NONE**.

10. Community Matters

(a) **Footpaths and Highways** (particularly the reporting and recording process) was discussed and the clerk reported that in correspondence with Cllr Bobbie Bennett said that she didn't have an up to date rota

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but will share the dates with you as they arise. She also reported that camera coming to Stansfield as often as possible but there is no scope for more frequent visits as there are a limited number of cameras for the whole of Suffolk.

Cllr Slater had received a definitive map of the village footpaths and suggested placing a version on the Village Noticeboard but it might be too large. It was reported that a folded version was destined for the Good Neighbour Scheme Welcome Pack for new residents and it could also be offered to any interested residents.

(b) **The Spring Litter Pick.** Cllr P Barnes the event had been a success with 14 volunteers and 12 bags of rubbish collected. She also commented on the sterling work Anne Corlett did in assisting her with refreshments. More information has been given in the Parish Pump magazine, May issue.

(c) **Report from Working Party, (Task & Finish Group), Old Chapel Graveyard . Report from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, gate repairs and hazard signs.** Cllrs Slater, Ball and P Barnes had studied the recommendations of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and made a plan to implement them which was endorsed by the council. Cllr Slater was currently updating the list of plants to be found on the site. The gates were being refurbished by Good Neighbour Scheme volunteers. Cllr Ball will be erecting temporary signs warning of tripping and other hazards at the site. Permanent signs are being costed.

(d) **Report from working party (Task & Finish Group) PC/Village Website.** After lengthy discussion it was agreed that all councillors should look in detail at the contents of the current Parish Council one.suffolk Website and also at a design for a new site put forward last year. They agreed to report their findings back to Cllr P Barnes or the Clerk by 8th July so the working party could discuss and make recommendations how to proceed. In the meantime the contents of the current site were to be examined and updated with a view to making them easier to find. Professional help was to be sought to achieve this (at no cost to the council).

The Stansfield Village Website (which links to the PC website): the cost of this at £60 per year was agreed to be borne in future by the PC.

(e) **Report from the working party (Task & Finish Group) Community Engagement Policy.**

Cllr Barnes reported that planning was in progress on two forthcoming events, a Summer Fun Day in August and a Nature/Wildlife orientated event in Autumn. Detailed work on a Community Engagement Policy for the PC would not start until after these events.

11. Clerk's Report

(a) Action points from the previous meetings were reviewed and resolved

(b) Urgent decisions made since the last meeting included payment for the defibrillator battery so it can be delivered.

(c) It was agreed to adopt the revised version of the Council's Standing Orders pending receipt of some new legislation regarding financial matters which will warrant a further revision.

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12. RFO report

- (a) The list of payments, bank reconciliation were approved and signed by the Chair. A statement of Accounts will follow.
- (b) Any virements across Cost Codes and from Reserves to regularise the budget were discussed and approved.
- (c) It was confirmed that Anne Lines to be the proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (1972 LGAs 151) of the Parish Council.
- (d) The Parish Council's Financial Regulations were discussed and accepted pro tem until new regulations are validated.
- (e) The extant Insurance Policy with Royal and Sun Alliance PLC was confirmed and noted that renewal is due in September 2024.
- (f) The Parish Council's banking arrangements were reviewed. It was proposed the signatories to Unity Bank should be the clerk, Anne Lines to view and submit payments with Cllrs R Barnes, Corlett and Slater to authorise. David Lines as the clerks trainee, advised he would look into savings accounts. It was also discussed that the Barclays Account will be closed and to transfer the balance to Unity B
- g) The Asset Register of the Parish Council was reviewed and confirmed.
- (h) The list of standing orders and Direct Debits for the coming financial year were discussed and approved that no change would taken place now.
- (i) It was discussed and agreed that the Suffolk Association of Local Councils would be the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the coming year.

16 Correspondence

The APM Agenda was available and the clerk to post it on the website.

17. Agenda Items for future meetings.

The Internal Audit Report 2024 to be distributed and released upon publication, at the end of July/ early July and any recommendations to be on the next agenda.
The Assets of Community Value to be added to the next agenda.

18. It was **confirmed** that the date of the next parish council meeting as **Tuesday 11th September 2024** at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.