



23.5.1

(Instead of 230)

**Minutes of the Parish Council Annual General Meeting
held on Wednesday 17th May at 7.00 pm**

Present Cllrs Johnson Houghton (Retiring Chair), Barnes P, Barnes R and Slater, SCC Cllr. Bennett,
David Lines (minute-taker) and eight members of the public

1. Election of the Chair of the new Parish Council

On opening the meeting, there was a question about the legitimacy of the meeting (particularly surrounding LGA 1972 s16 and The Representation of the People Act 1985 s 50). After lengthy discussion, the outgoing Chair, Cllr. Johnson Houghton, resolved to proceed with the meeting. She spoke about the events of the preceding civic year, the outgoing Council's achievements, and then expressed her thanks to the outgoing Parish Councillors and to the County and District Councillors respectively. Cllr. Houghton Johnson then called for nominations to the post of Chair of the Parish Council. Cllr. Rex Barnes was nominated and seconded - there being no further nomination, it was:

RESOLVED that Cllr. Rex Barnes shall be the Chairman of Stansfield Parish Council.

2. Declaration of acceptance of office by the new Chair.

Cllr Barnes gave his own welcome to the meeting, thanking Cllr Houghton Johnson and all the other Councillors for their service to Stansfield. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Cllr Houghton Johnson as a token of appreciation.

The new Chairman made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, signing his form, and then gave formal notice about the recording of the meeting.

3. Co-option of new councillors (Representation of the People Act 1985 - Chapter 50)

There were four signed applications for the three vacancies on the Parish Council. The three applicants present spoke in support of their application and then each was voted upon in turn, in order of application.

Applicant	Votes for (maximum three)	Co-opted?
Ann Corlett 4/5/23	3	Yes
Andrew Pallet 9/5/23	3	Yes
Justin Ball 10/5/23	3	Yes
Marcus Hopkins 17/5/23	0	No

4. Declaration of acceptance of office by the new Councillors – DEFERRED until the end of the meeting.

5. RESOLVED – to accept apologies for absence from Cllr. Spillett (holiday). WSC Cllr Pugh also sent her apologies.
Declarations of interest (and delegated Declarations of Interest Dispensation decisions) - **NONE**

6. Minutes of the last meeting

Following amendments to the draft minutes of the meeting of the Council held on **20th March 2023** (*both versions were circulated to the new councillors prior to the meeting*), it was:

RESOLVED (*by those councillors present at the March meeting*) - to approve the amended minutes as a true and accurate record. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

7. RESOLVED - to appoint David Lines as Locum Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer - **LGA 1972 s112 (1) & (2)**
Appointment for 5 – 7 hours a week for a maximum period of 13 weeks at a rate of £20 an hour, plus travel expenses at 40p a mile. Subject to one week's notice of contract termination on either side.

8. Public Forum. *The public may ask questions relating to the work and services of the Council. Questions may not always be answered at the meeting, but they will be dealt with appropriately. If a question is to be discussed by councillors, it will be added to the agenda for the next Council meeting.*

Questions were raised about:

- **The veracity of the March minutes** – *confirmed as in 6 (above)*
- **The cost of and budget for the appointment of the Locum Clerk** – *advised that budgets may be amended at any time by the Council with virements from other budget headings or reserves. As financial reports were incomplete, this would require formal acceptance once they were received.*



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- **A potential complaint** – *advice was offered that it would be unwise to indulge in discussion if a formal complaint and potential investigation was pending.*

9. End of Year Financial Reports

To **RECEIVE** the Annual Financial Reports, including the Bank Reconciliation of 31st March 2023 - **DEFERRED**

10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

- a) To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the Internal Audit Report for 2022/2023 - **DEFERRED**
- b) To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023 - **DEFERRED**
- c) To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the Accounting Statement for 2022/2023 - **DEFERRED**

11. Recruitment of a permanent Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council

RESOLVED - to **APPROVE** the terms and conditions relating to the advertisement for and recruitment of the Proper Officer to the Council (as attached). An Interview Panel of Cllrs. R. Barnes (Chairman), Corlett and Pallett was appointed.

12. Planning and Development

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

NOTED – the following planning decisions, delegated decisions or other correspondence received.

DCON(B)/22/1266 | Application to discharge conditions 17 (soft landscaping) and 18 (boundary treatment) of DC/22/1266/FUL | **Flax Farm Barn** Stansfield Road.

DCON(B)/22/0536 Application to part discharge conditions 4, 5a, 5b, 5d and 5e of application DC/22/0536/LB **The Old Rectory Plough Hill**

13. Community Matters

Emergency Planning Policy – requires updating – **DEFERRED** to July meeting

Noticeboards repairs - two quotations already sought. **DEFERRED** to next meeting

Working Groups

RESOLVED – to **NOMINATE** Cllr. P Barnes to lead the two working Groups for the purposes of managing the **Defibrillator** and related matters (**VETS leaflets/ First Aid Training**) and to create the Terms of Reference for and the development of a **Community Engagement Group**. Mrs Jan Pallett will lead on the defibrillator inspections.

14. Clerk's Report

- a. To **REVIEW** and **RESOLVE** on any action points from previous meetings - **NONE**
- b. To **NOTE** any urgent decisions made since the last meeting - **NONE**
- c. **RESOLVED** - to **CONFIRM** the regular meeting dates for the coming year as 17th July, 18th September and 20th November.
- d. To **APPOINT** representatives to outside bodies – to be discussed in July meeting
- e. To **DISCUSS** the new website and dedicated Council email addresses for all members and staff – **DEFERRED** pending a review by the Locum Clerk.
- f. **RESOLVED** - to **APPROVE** the Parish Council's Standing Orders now and undertake a more detailed review later in the civic calendar.

15. RFO Report

- a. **RESOLVED** - to **APPROVE** the following payments – Aubergine (new website) - **£1,018.80** and West Suffolk Council (Dog bins collection service) - **£91.52**.



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RESOLVED – to **NOTE** the submitted Bank Reconciliation and to **DEFER** the Statement of Accounts pending finalisation of the March 31st Year End accounts

- b. To **APPROVE** any virements across Cost Codes and from Reserves to regularise the budget - **DEFERRED**
- c. **CONFIRMED** - the appointment of David Lines as the Responsible Financial Officer of the Parish Council (1972 LGA s151)
- d. **RESOLVED** - to **APPROVE** the Parish Council’s Financial Regulations now and undertake a more detailed review later in the civic calendar)
- e. **NOTED** - the extant Insurance Policy with Royal and Sun Alliance PLC, due for review and renewal in September 2023.
- f. **RESOLVED** - to **REVIEW** the Parish Council’s banking arrangements and consider opening an account with Unity Trust
RESOLVED – to appoint Cllrs P Barnes, R Barnes, Corlett and Slater as signatories to the Parish Council’s bank account(s)
- g. **NOTED** - the Asset Register of the Parish Council.
- h. To **APPROVE** the list of Standing Orders and Direct Debits for the coming financial year - **DEFERRED**
- i. To **CONSIDER** the appointment of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils as the Parish Council’s Internal Auditor for the coming year - **DEFERRED**

16. Correspondence

To **NOTE** any correspondence since the last meeting (not already circulated) - **NONE**.

17. Agenda Items for the July meeting - Good Neighbour Scheme grant / Noticeboard repairs

18. RESOLVED - to **CONFIRM** the date of the extraordinary meeting as **Monday 19th June 2023** at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.